

California Legislature

JOINT COMMITTEE ON
REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND IMMIGRATION

The Impact of Refugee Resettlement
Part II

PAUL B. CARPENTER

Chairman

ART AGNOS

Vice Chairman

HEARING TRANSCRIPT

San Francisco/Alameda Counties

(May 6, 1983)

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CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Welcome to the second public hearing by the Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement and Immigration, and thank you for being here with us today.

I'm Paul Carpenter, State Senator from the 33rd District and Chairman of this Joint Committee. With me today are, next to me, Assemblywoman Lucy Killea from San Diego, and next to her is Assemblywoman Doris Allen from Westminster. We're also going to have with us today Assemblyman Art Agnos from San Francisco, and Assemblyman Bill Jones from Fresno will also be joining us later this morning. From the staff of the Joint Committee, we have Mrs. Jo Frederick immediately to my right, Mr. Vu-Duc Vuong our Senior Consultant, and Mrs. Elenita Canaling-Nixon who is Secretary to the committee.

As you have seen from the list of witnesses, which are available there, we have today not only a very long list but also a wide spectrum of interests and representation. I'm particularly impressed by the very strong participation from the refugee community here. It shows eloquently that the refugee community has begun the very significant process of integrating into the mainstream of American society.

In light of your participation in the legislative and political process here today, I am also very pleased to note the fortunate coincidence of the location of this hearing. This room, as many of you know by now, is the Ceremonial Courtroom, the place where immigrants take their oath of allegiance to the United States and become citizens of this country. I need not point out to you the implications of citizenship and with it, the right to vote. Suffice

to say that I and other members of this Joint Committee look forward to the time when we can work with all of you here today as fellow citizens. At the same time, I'm pleased with the symbolic value of being in this room. I also know from earlier this morning that this looks very formidable, somewhat cold and perhaps not very friendly, and I want you to know that that's not true, that the people on this committee are all very friendly, and we're not half as formidable as we look up here behind this imposing facade.

For today, we are anxious to hear from all of you, citizens and refugees alike, for your views and recommendations relating to the refugee resettlement in California. And as we have a very long list of witnesses, let us proceed. But as we proceed, I note that we have, I believe, 43 scheduled witnesses today. If each witness spoke for 10 minutes and we then had a few minutes of questioning, that would mean that we would be here until---for 10 hours, and since I know that many of you would not like to be here until 8 o'clock tonight, if---particularly those of you with written material---if you would try and summarize your testimony and be as succinct and concise as possible, both those of you who are listening and we on the committee would be very appreciative. With that admonishment, why don't we begin.

MR. VUONG: Before we start, if you'll notice that the list of the witnesses, most of these witnesses are of Vietnam origin. [inaudible]....looks so formidable and very political, no? Actually, they are putting these [inaudible]....of witnesses so that people can follow [inaudible].... Thank you. Again, we have long list so please would you have....already have written statements, please

just summarize it and with [inaudible]....perhaps we [inaudible].... constituent.

The first witness today is Reverend Carl Pihl who's Chairman of the California Refugee Forum. Reverend Pihl?

REVEREND PIHL: Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Joint Committee. I am Reverend Carl Pihl, Regional Consultant for Lutheran Social Services of Northern California and Nevada. I currently chair the Santa Clara County Community Forum on Refugee Affairs and also the Statewide California Forum on Refugee Affairs.

I would like to make one brief point before you today. In the current refugee services delivery system for the State of California, the participation and resources of the voluntary agencies, otherwise known as VOLAGS.....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Excuse me, I think some of the people in the rear are having difficulty hearing you.

REVEREND PIHL: Would it help to lean into this?

?????????: Pull the mike.....

REVEREND PIHL: Is that....cause the problem? (Microphone positioning) Okay, how's this in the back of the room? Good. Okay. In the current refugee services delivery system for the State of California, the participation and resources of the voluntary agencies, otherwise known as VOLAGS, are excluded. Voluntary agencies statewide view this as a very serious problem. Allow me to elaborate by that.

In the current services delivery system, including the Central Intake Unit, VOLAGS are required to provide certain information. That information relates totally to the sanctioning process, not

to any employment plan. Nowhere in the system is any provider required to provide any information to the VOLAGS. Overlooked is the fact that VOLAGS do not cease providing resettlement services simply because the refugee has entered the State's system.

Another factor that appears to have been overlooked is that VOLAGS annually contract with the Department of State to provide certain core services and a variety of optional services. Since VOLAGS have never been funded adequately to provide all resettlement services, such as ESL or vocational training, we have relied on federally and state funded service providers. And presently, we receive no information about a refugee's status, and we have responsibility for those refugees. We are prevented, then, in many cases, from complying with the terms of our contract with the State Department due to a lack of information. I'd like to give you two specific examples of voluntary agency resources that are currently being ignored.

Take first of all, VOLAGS are a resource, and that simple fact, in itself, is being overlooked, both financial and material resources. They are currently underused. VOLAGS have background information on each entering refugee, known as biodata, that includes information such as previous work history, education and extended and immediate family composition. This information is never utilized by the state funded providers since VOLAGS have no input to that system.

Voluntary agencies work closely with the private volunteer sector. The private sector has provided enormous, uncounted amounts of time and money for refugee resettlement. That is true

for the past, and it is true for now. To continue to operate a service delivery system that excludes the private sector input and resources, and in my particular case that translates out to churches, I think that is sheer folly to ignore that. I firmly believe that costs to the State for refugee resettlement can be reduced appreciably by proper utilization of the role and resources of the voluntary agencies. And I am willing, personally, to support those efforts if it would take an increase in taxes.

I ask today that you do what you can to correct this situation. And as an attachment, I have attached minutes of a meeting that was held in Santa Clara County between service providers, a representative of the State Central Intake Unit, and the point is that nowhere in these two pages of minutes is there any mention of voluntary agencies.

Thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: The voluntary agencies have been in the forefront of helping with the resettlement problem. I agree with the little tone of indignation I hear in your not being mentioned in that kind of a context. I'm a little bit concerned about the lack of information that you pose. You know, we have---part of the reason for that is we have very strict laws related to confidentiality. And to give you the kind of information that would be most helpful to you, I think we would have to change some of those confidentiality laws, and even though that might be very desirous in the short run, I wonder what the costs to us might be in the long run if we do impact those confidentiality statutes. Do you have any feel for that?

REVEREND PIHL: I have no estimate as to what the costs may be, but we have addressed the confidentiality problem in many different arenas, and I, frankly, can't see how it's going to be a large issue. I believe it's something that could be handled either categorically, which is something that your committee, I believe, could handle, or we could handle it individually with releases of information. But currently, we've been told that even that probably will not be a good enough type of waiver.

(?)
ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I have a question. In your perceptions and opinions, why do you need or why is it that this exchange of information, the resources, aren't utilized?

REVEREND PIHL: You're asking why that is not being utilized?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Why they're used....yes.

REVEREND PIHL: I do not have an answer for that. I can't explain it. It's a mystery to me as well.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I personally [inaudible]....this area. I want to [inaudible]....and we know that you are one of the major reasons and sources for refugees coming into that [inaudible].... and you're one of the first to work with them, to explain to them, (?) to help them and then all of a sudden you're not good enough in completing that help. And seeing it through to the end when you're seeing those funds [inaudible]....a lot of those funds through to the end. Again, I know there are hindrances of confidentiality laws. I can promise you that [inaudible]....why. However, there is a barrier---because I [inaudible]....to understand [inaudible].... of bringing them over, working with them, trying to get them someplace, working [inaudible]....and yet once you have---for the

reason the Vietnamese come over [inaudible]....and many of the
(?)
cases have been in our lives, not trying to help them completely
see through to the end their resettlement. And I do have some
(?)
concerns about that, but not volunteers, you know at this country,
and I hope we'd be one. So, I really wanted to assert [inaudible]....
(?)
I heard her say type of testimony whose [inaudible]....needed get
a real feel for frustrations when we heard testimony in Los Angeles
a week ago. And, I do want to pursue that a little further as
well.

REVEREND PIHL: Thank you. I think your perception is correct
and maybe just one addendum is that as the refugees turn to the
voluntary agencies when faced with a loss of either public assis-
tance funding or the end of the program or for all kinds of reasons,
we are there long after they have completed other types of programs.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you for your testimony.

REVEREND PIHL: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Our next speaker is Mr. Prapakorn Smiti, Chief
of the Operation Section for the Ministry of the Interior of
Thailand. Mr. Smiti please.

MR. SMITI: Mr. Chairman, [inaudible]....ladies and gentlemen,
first of all, I would like to express my gratitude that I have been
invited to be in this meeting here. I appreciate it very much.

The reason I visit to the United States this time of the
year and for two reasons that I be here. The first one I got the
scholarship by the United Nations for the human right program to
(?)
see how the refugee resettlement in U.S.A.---special now in
California State.

Second of my reason, I came to visit U.S.A. because I would like to have some talk with the man from Washington to see how the program of the refugee now in Thailand can be able to resettle (?) down U.S.A. with a more quota and with a guarantee. What I would like to speak out this morning about what I had learned and what I had observed when I have a chance to be in California State.

First of all, on behalf of the Asian people, on behalf of the refugee, I would like to appreciate for what the California State people with a [inaudible]....and, or the Senator, and, or the people that try to work real hard with the refugee resettlement.

But what they have found out that the program that we try to work out right now, first of all, I think that somehow or sometime we don't have enough expert to work on the refugee people because somehow, sometime we try to work like a [inaudible].... Is that mean that anything come up too fast, you know, when do you move the people from Southeast Asia come to United States, we try to do our best for them. But what happen if we [inaudible].... on that some program that we set up. It's not [inaudible]....for what they're looking forward to.

First of all, as all of us know, that the refugee people face a lot of English for the second language, and after that, with the cultural shock, and they think...somehow, sometime, I feel that the refugee need more care and tended for what they are here in the United States. (?)

I give you example: When they came here everybody talking about the welfare aid, talking about all the refugee that don't have a way or don't have a chance to go to work and they have to

depend upon the welfare. It's so many reasons that why they're still on the welfare. I give you one example: I have a chance
(?)
to interweave with one Laos family. They have an extended family, you know. All of their lives they never been work, and that's part of their culture and part of their custom. But when they are here, they try to adapt to the new way of living; they try to adapt to American culture and American customs. But it's had to take time for them. And that is very most important part of it, you see.
(?)

And what I found out that you have first the secondary migration in California State. I know it's very---quite a problem because it's [inaudible]....like when I went to Merced or I went to Fresno. A lot of secondary migration is over there. That's the reason that---because I think somehow, sometime we lack of communication. We lack of information between the national [inaudible]....agency, between the federal, state and the county level. Because when they cut the sponsorship and all of us moved them, you know, to someplace like South Dakota, Minnesota, and they didn't get used to the weather, they didn't get used to it the culture, so later on in next two or three weeks, you know, they just move to California because they like the weather here, they have a lot of relative here, you know. That's what I try to point out is that how we can be able to work very close between a national [inaudible]....agency, between the federal, between state and the county level. I think the most important part is that how we can get the coordinator committee to set up to every level between the federal, the state and the county. And I think the county mayor should pay a lot of [inaudible]....on this. He

should have a lot of [inaudible]...get the good understanding between the local people and the new refugee that had been arriving. That is most very important part. It's just like how we can sell the goods to the people, how we can show the behavior of the refugee and let the local people realize the [inaudible]...before the refugee already [inaudible]...there, it's going to be too late. Okay.

The second reason that I came here just I mention in the early state that right now, in the present time, we have about hundred thousand of the refugee down in Thailand and from 1975 up to 1980, the U.S. Government pick up a lot of the refugee from Thailand. But in the present time right now, we have only 6,000 of the refugee that the U.S. Government can be able to pick them up from Thailand. The 6,000 quota that the U.S. Government have given us didn't mean that all of them can be able to be here because they had to go to on the requirement of INS, and right now, when I have a chance to visit at Washington D.C., I try to point out to the Washington man that we have a lot of the families reunion here, you know. We have a lot of people---the refugee that's still in the camp would like to come to United States, you know. So it's very rare that the U.S. Government or the people at the California State really understand the burden of the [inaudible]...many have faced right now and you understand how the humanitarian that the people would like to get, you know, to join the family reunion. I think it is very important part that we have to work very close together on a human intelligent basis. Don't look at the problem, you know, that face with the U.S. Government. Don't look at that we have a

high percentage of unemployment here. Don't look at the problem of the economy status that the U.S. Government have face. But we have to look for the humanitarian---how we can work toward the goal of peace.

And last and but not least, I would like to express that please understand all the refugee here. Please [inaudible]....in the first time of their generation. I believe that---that second generation, they can be well adapted for the American culture and their American people.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: I think you've made some excellent points, and I think it will be one of the responsibilities of this committee to try and increase the quality of communication between the different levels of organizations that are working with the refugee community. That's an outstanding suggestion. I also feel very strongly about your suggestion that kinship be important as a criteria in determining who from the camps should be allowed to come to this country, and I think that probably ought to be taken into account more than it has been. We certainly welcome the role that your country has taken in giving these refugees shelter until such time as they can be relocated around the world. Lucy?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: What do you see as the kind of [inaudible]....problem for the 6,000 here---your quota is insufficient---what do you see as the kind [inaudible]....problem?

MR. SMITI: Well, the problem right now is that it's not the number of the refugee that is the problem. The problem of it is that how we can be able, you know, to stop the [inaudible]....coming

of the refugee from Thailand, and at the same time, how we can be able to get the amount of people that's still left over in Thailand to come to the third country because they make application for that. They would like to go to the third country, you know. And the point of it is that when U.S. Government set up the quota for the whole Southeast Asia, you know, it's about 64,000 or something like that. But we look for the Thai, for the refugee in a Thai camp. They gave us, you know, approximately, you know, 6,000, but they mean that only 6,000 people can be able to come here. They have to go through all the social requirements that the INS has set up. But, you know, in the past, you know, that the INS never set up any kind of requirement at all, you know. [Inaudible].... refugee from Indochina, you know, they just pick all them up. But now, you know, when there's [inaudible]... Southeast Asian here, (?) now they have to be strict over there, you know. That's why I'm [inaudible]....

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Thank you. I think there are....is, of course, the other side of the problem from the U.S. point of view, but I think you have to come to a good balance and accommodations so that humanitarians [inaudible]....are both considered. And I appreciate your coming here. Thanks very much.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Mrs. Allen?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Just a couple of comments on your earlier statements on cultural shock, the fact that dependency on welfare--- (. ?) some of those [inaudible]....and what I---from what I can handle so far, we've had people coming so quickly [inaudible]....at that point where we can say if you'd slow down just enough to say, gee, (?)

what are we doing about it, and I'm sure if we took the influx [inaudible]....as we could, but now is the time to deal with the cultural aspects.

There's a tension in many of the communities that you talked about. Again, perhaps, through your avenue of communications (?) through national, state and local and the community tensions--- resettlement for the refugee and a lot of cultural understanding. And, you know, there are some areas, I think, through that second generation you were talking about that we properly delve into and work, hopefully, toward that end. But there are some misconceptions out in the public, and I think it's needed to talk about regarding the myth of the 3% loan for business, beginning a new business and foreclosing, and I think myths such as those need to be dealt with as well to relieve some of the tensions that people are feeling that they're not getting their portion of that and that the refugee is getting more than their share. And those kinds of things need to be talked about to say that is not true. There are not those types of loans in the community. I think as we of the committee, hopefully, can help in those community tensions as we start dealing with this. Other than that, I can only (?) tell you that much of what you said as we said elsewhere and stated in these hearings, and we're listening, and we'll work on it.

MR. SMITI: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you for being with us, and thank you for your testimony.

MR. VUONG: Thank you, Mr. Smiti. I thank you especially for the [inaudible]....mentioned that please excuse their first

[inaudible]....income. I think it's a very slow [inaudible]....and I appreciate your honesty to speak to that. Simply, I hope that the refugee of the first generation can move back and [inaudible].... don't have to work until the second generation.

Our next speaker and from now on, I think, since you have a list of speakers [inaudible]....if we don't have enough room so the speaker if you want when the speaker is almost through their turn you can please feel free to come up here and [inaudible]....

Next speaker is Mr. Michael Huynh who is Chairman of San Francisco Refugee Program. Mr. Huynh.

MR. HUYNH: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I'm from the first generation....excuse me!

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Excuse me, you're going to have to move that just a little closer to yourself.

MR. HUYNH: It is, indeed, such a treat to see Mr. Chairman and members of the committee here today and to respond in kind, the communities insist on sending a delegation here to greet you, and there are more than 100 of them here in this room.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. HUYNH: And they ordered me to send you their warmest welcome to San Francisco.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. HUYNH: We are very happy to have you here in San Francisco and this opportunity to share feelings with you. What you don't learn from us today you can ask Assemblyman Agnos. Few might understand my people and our needs as well as he does.

I want to say that I am very proud today. I'm proud to see

Mr. Vuong sitting with you as a consultant to this committee. I'm proud of him, and I am even more proud of you for realizing the importance of fully understanding the needs of my people. You have set a fine example to your colleagues.

My comments will be very brief because you will hear many people speak today. I am also proud to point out that many of them are refugees. As you listen to them, keep in mind that we are able to speak for ourselves. As you know, the state office responsible for refugee resettlement is the Office of Refugee Services. I want the members of this committee to understand that I hope the concerns of our government are not reflected by that department. Aside from their lack of cooperation, [inaudible].... borders to harrassment, the fact that most Southeast Asians work there should be an embarrassment to Governor and to every elected state official in California. Only few of you understand the needs of my people in California. I urge you to carefully question the ability of the Office of Refugee Services to even begin to meet these needs.

Self-sufficiency is our woe, and we need your help. You can help us gain access to all the state offices. Refugees are like other poor people in this State. And with your guidance, necessary criteria would help come to our peoples make [inaudible]....is the topic of assistance dollars available at this time.

Again, on behalf of the refugees of San Francisco, we thank you for being here with us today.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: We respect your desire to become self-sufficient, and we're going to do everything possible to make

that happen as quickly as possible for you. Thank you for your testimony.

MR. VUONG: The next speaker is Mr. Nguyen Tan who is Refugee Project Coordinator for the Asian Community Mental Health Services from Oakland.

MR. NGUYEN TAN: Mr. Chairman and the members of the committee, I would like to take this very rare opportunity to talk to you today about the need for implementing a long-term funding policy for mental health and social adjustment services.

Almost every Indochinese family shares a common tragedy: a child, a parent or family member left behind, killed, lost or raped. The traumatic experiences of Vietnamese boat people being savagely massacred and their women and children raped on high seas by the pirates should not be forgotten.

According to a 1981 survey released by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, mental problems was identified as one of the primary handicapping conditions suffered by many refugees who had to go through extreme adversities to escape from their homeland. Only 50% of the roughly 1.5 million Indochinese refugees who left their homeland eventually came out alive from the whole ordeal of escape. Through the process, hundreds of thousands had to be separated from their families, either because of death or starvation. Among the fortunate who survived the nightmare and who finally resettled in this land of freedom, many are still struggling to psychologically cope with the loss and trauma, to say nothing about their painstaking efforts to rebuild their lives and adjust to this new society.

In this age of unemployment, which also affects the larger community, their efforts to find a job to sustain their families, if they still have their families, seem insurmountable, particularly if they have come from rural areas of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and, therefore, have to convert their rudimentary skills into more marketable skills that would get them jobs in this highly technological society.

In this context, many refugees began, unfortunately, to suffer from a whole array of emotional disorders, even after--or especially after living here for two or three years. Among these delayed problems are post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety disorder and even severe psychosis. These mental health problems, often disguised in the form of psychosomatic complaints, severely curb the refugees' productive performance in a job search situation, a vocational training course, or, an ESL, English as a second language, classroom.

In 1980 the State of California came up with the Master Plan for refugee services which emphasized the urgency of training Indochinese mental health workers to meet the emotional needs of refugees in California. This was followed by the State's allocation of refugee mental health funds for the first time in Fiscal Year '80-81. The following year, in 1982, under the Budget Control Language, mental health and social adjustment services were completely eliminated from the fundable service categories. The loss of mental health and social adjustment services added up to the tremendous sufferings of refugee clients who already were facing a cut in other services. As the situation worsened, police

officers and probation officers noticed an increase in youth crimes in the East Bay. This increase in crime is but the reflection of growing social pressures in the refugee communities. The Probation Department had to increasingly turn to bilingual/bicultural mental health resources for consultation, referral for counseling under its diversion program.

During this current Fiscal Year '83-84, mental health and social adjustment were refunded in the East Bay. This inconsistency in funding, defunding and refunding these needed services testifies to a lack of consistency, and, perhaps a lack of seriousness on the part of the policymakers to think about such an important human problem. If this situation should continue, it would only mean that the taxpayers would have to pay for the tremendous administrative costs in restarting programs, to say nothing about the cost of retraining new manpower or the higher cost of treating severely ill clients at more restricted treatment facilities such as the state mental hospitals. Referrals to those more costly and more restricted treatment facilities could have been avoided if clients had recourse to local, bilingual outpatient services or earlier intervention in the course of their resettlement.

So, I, therefore, sincerely urge for a more consistent and humane funding policy in regards to mental health and social adjustment services, which, after all, are critical supportive services, if the refugees are to become self-sufficient.

Thank you very much for your time.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: You make a very good point that there's not been adequate control language in the budget to make sure that

there'd been adequate funds into the mental health area. That's a point that has not been made before this to this committee, and we appreciate it. I think it's an excellent point.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I agree, and we had testified before us in Orange County, Los Angeles area, last week, a police chief, and there are increases of crime. I think what you're talking about is very useful and certainly it would promise the revenue. I don't think they're going to talk about [inaudible]...., and with those who really are into societal issues points that that has not been taken care of. I would agree with Senator Carpenter--- control language. In other words, you are right. There has not been enough commitment and seriousness to the situation regarding the policymakers' decisions. And I think that that---that definitely is something which you'll see addressed.

MR. NGUYEN TAN: Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you for your help.

MR. VUONG: Our next speaker is Mr. Nguyen Van Dinh, Project Director from Bay Area Indochinese Mental Health Project in San Francisco.

MR. NGUYEN VAN DINH: Chairperson Carpenter, committee members, my name is Nguyen Van Dinh. I am the Program Director of the Bay Area Indochinese Mental Health Services, a community-based and presently private foundation-supported mental health agency that provides direct clinical services as well as preventive services to the Indochinese refugees in the City and County of San Francisco.

I am here to present some of the mental health concerns of

the Indochinese refugees in relation to services, manpower, training, planning and development of mental health programs. This Joint Committee hearing has drawn much interest from the Cambodian, Lao, ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese communities, and my remarks are derived, in part, from the input of refugee community people, Lao, Cambodian, ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese service providers, trainers, as well as administrators---many of whom are here today for this hearing as you can see.

The convenient summarizing term "Indochinese" simplifies too much the diverse groups of people whose histories, cultures and languages are very distinct from one another. However, as refugees, these people have experienced the following things in common: the problems and trauma associated with war, cultural and social transplantation, sudden and radical life changes, a lack of adequate preparation for successful coping in their new life---uh, environment. Their low command of English is the first and most formidable barrier to their linkage and utilization of mental health services. The mental health needs and problems of the Indochinese resettled in this country are those of a special population with many cultural, linguistic and ethnic subgroups.

Despite their lack of awareness of mental health services and their reticence---due to cultural factors---to present themselves for professional services when needed, it is very disturbing to note that many Americans, including resettlement service providers, still believe that Indochinese refugees (1) experience few mental health problems, (2) have little need for mental health and mental health-related social services, and

(3) have sufficient resources, manpower and otherwise for those who needed the services. The evidence and my direct experience with the refugee clients and the community, both as clinician and administrator, have proved the contrary.

The unmet mental health needs, the lack of trained manpower and gaps in services are substantial. These needs and problems are being considerably multiplied with the known steady increase in the number of Indochinese refugees, especially with the Vietnamese, have resulted from secondary migration to the State of California.

I recommend the following for consideration and action by the Joint Committee with respect to the service delivery system that:

- 1.) Mental health resources be defined as services that alleviate the external and internal stresses of transplantation and improve the quality of life, in its many domains, of the Cambodian, Lao, ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese-Americans and larger population. Therefore, these services are to be considered basic entitlements of all refugees, not just pilot programs to be taken over by private and public concerns, as it is happening at the present time.
- 2.) Bilingual and bicultural professionals and para-professionals be trained and employed as service providers where substantial Cambodian, Lao, ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese-American population exist.
- 3.) Legislation be recommended to support the flexible

implementation of different models of services for this population. Augment existing programs to serve the Cambodian, Lao, ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese-Americans. Create new special programs and multiple service programs which include mental health services.

- 4.) Programs in preventive services---meaning, consultation, community education, information and organization---and outreach and home treatment services be supported to lessen the barriers to taking action in mental health treatment.
- 5.) Existing formal and informal community care support systems---meaning, refugee-run service agencies, mutual assistance associations, refugee religious groups---be consulted, utilized, involved and supported in mental health programs for Cambodian, Lao, ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese-Americans.
- 6.) Refugee-run multiple service centers which include mental health services or have linkages with community mental health services, be rewarded and encouraged for plans and programs for Cambodian, Lao, ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese-Americans. Programs for these special populations not be relegated to agencies where Cambodian, Lao, ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese-Americans are only front-line workers and have no voice in the decision-making process concerning the welfare of their own communities.

With respect to planning, manpower and training concerns of the Cambodian, Lao, ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese-Americans, I

recommend for consideration and action that:

- 1.) These populations and/or their representatives be consulted, utilized and involved in the planning, development and coordination of mental health programs for their own communities at all levels of the State as well as local levels of government.
- 2.) Recruitment, production, distribution and utilization of mental health manpower be adequate with respect to linguistic and ethnic/cultural backgrounds or providers, geography, types of specialty and sub-specialty and types of human problems met.
- 3.) Training in community mental health be supported for services in the Cambodian, Lao, ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese-American communities from the core of mental health disciplines---meaning, psychology, social work, psychiatry, nursing---a key element of their training to occur in the multi-ethnic, multi-disciplinary collaborative community settings involving primary service providers, community agencies, teaching institutions and the various levels of government.

In my remarks, I have presented some concerns about the mental health service delivery system, planning, manpower and training needs of the Cambodian, Lao, ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese-Americans in the form of recommendation for consideration and action. Detailed accounts of some of these concerns are contained in the written document accompanying these remarks.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER We're fortunate in Southern California to have Dr. Daniel Le who has become a psychologist since he's been in this country. Do you have any psychologists in Northern California who've come from the refugee community?

MR. NGUYEN VAN DINH: To the best of my knowledge, there is none at this point in time.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: So Dr. Le's the only one in California. That's not a very good record.

MR. NGUYEN VAN DINH: I guess so.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: We appreciate your recommendations, and we hope you'll leave with us a copy of them.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Just one question I think that you didn't touch on [inaudible]...is the receptivity of the refugees for this kind of help. Do they---is this something we need to work on also?

(?)

MR. NGUYEN VAN DINH: Yes. I think that will be relayed through the preventive services that, you know, that is needed for the community. I have mentioned the, you know, things like consultation, community education, information and organization. It is....since the mental health services are new to the community, in order to overcome that barrier, we need to do more of that kind of services. At this point in time of this year in the County of San Francisco, in terms of staff time, we don't have much for that kind of services. We have been emphasizing, concentrating on direct, you know, clean core services through the---the refugees who need the services.

??????????: To answer you question, [inaudible]....a psycho-

logist but we have a psychiatrist working [inaudible]....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Excellent! Even though I am a psychologist, we also welcome additional psychiatrists (laughter) and social workers.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: I look forward to your having [inaudible]....

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I would just ask--you talked about the reason that many of your people [inaudible]...to Mrs. Killea's question, do the people ask for that when they come in, do they ask for what their [inaudible]...., do you see visibly that they need the help or do they ask to or let you know that they are having trauma or you just recognize the symptoms? How was that coming to you in a recognizable form that there is a great need?

MR. NGUYEN VAN DINH: In terms of clients coming to the agency, for example, it has been referral from inpatient units, from family members. There is a lot of people who are with the resettlement agencies, for example. It's....maybe because of their lack of awareness of the, you know, services that are available for them or to slack off understanding what is, you know, mental health problem, mental illness on the part of the front-line workers to make referrals for services.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you for your testimony.

MR. VUONG: Our next speaker is Mr. Ed Nathan who is the Executive Director for the Zellerbach Family Fund and also the Chairman of the State Advisory Council. Mr. Nathan.

MR. NATHAN: Thank you for the opportunity to present some ideas to your committee. I'd first like to commend the committee for your selection of consultants. Both Jo Frederick and Vuong

Vu-Duc are respected in the refugee community. They are knowledgeable, and we're hoping that they will not only educate your committee to the major problems that we face but that they will also be a wonderful liaison to those of us who've been working in the field for some time.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. NATHAN: I'd like to address my remarks to some of the need for understanding in the Legislature for the problems of refugees. I think that the problems of refugees are compounded by the recession and that there is a general impatience that's being reflected both in the ideas of how to get refugees back to work, are they cooperating, what's their situation, and it seems to me that a committee such as yours needs to be the compassionate and understanding voice to your colleagues, so that budget control language, so that legislation that's passed, is not looked upon as punitive to refugees who are really facing some very difficult problems along with other Americans in resettlement. And I think what I'd like to say is that if we could change some of the emphasis from a sanction point of view---what happens to you if you don't do something---more to an incentive program for refugees, that this would---this could be constructive, and by incentive, would be what are the benefits for refugees in attempting work opportunities? Will those refugees, then, who risk working and who give up something to work, have a first priority in learning opportunities, in advancement opportunities, that will eventually benefit their own lives? Are there ways that employers can be given some incentives in terms of help with medical assistance or families be

given help with medical assistance in a special situation so that they will take that risk that they are really unable to take now if they're concerned about their families?

We do have an opportunity in California with the new targeted assistance program that will bring some \$24 million to various counties in---maybe I'm not exactly right in the figure, but I think it will be close---how much is it, Jo? 21. Well, they've added some with Merced and those others. So, it'll be around \$21 million. That can be a reorganization, in a sense, of the way refugee resettlement is being approached in California. It can put the emphasis on job creation, on economic development, on involvement of the private sector, in a way that the private sector hasn't been involved.

I think the legislators need to become a part of that, because most of those voluntary agencies and providers do not really have good links to the business community, to the financial community, that can aid refugees. This isn't asking for preferential treatment for refugees. It's asking for a new involvement of the private sector, and although county boards of supervisors can play some part in this, in most counties they have not been active in this aspect of it. So, if your committee can really come to some understanding of the new approach of targeted assistance, you might be able to involve people in your own districts who have not been involved before in a new kind of technical assistance in program development.

The only other comment that I'd want to make is that your committee could be of some value in seeing that the administrative

costs that have been set up for target assistance, which could come to a total of 15%--5% at the state level and 10% at the county level---but that, that these funds really be used efficiently and that only those funds be used that are absolutely necessary for the administration of the program. It isn't the program that requires a tremendous state or county involvement in administrative costs. It requires some, but there needs to be some concern on the part of the legislators to see that what is used is used very efficiently so that most of the money will really go towards the programs that will give refugees an opportunity for work.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: That's a revolutionary idea that we ought to apply to all programs. (Laughter)

MS. FREDERICK: Mr. Nathan, do you have any ideas about what kinds of things you'd like to see at the state and local government [inaudible]....terms of the administrative attention to this kind of program? Let's assume that, you know, some of the [inaudible].... are monitoring the things who have to be [inaudible]....federal requirements, but what about some of the things, some of the technical assistance kinds of things you were talking about in....in terms of linkages with the private community or the community development sort of model? Would that be something that could be an example of how you'd like to see the administration really used? Or do you have any.....

MR. NATHAN: Right. No, I think there could---I think we could have different kinds of technical assistance teams that are composed of people who know something about economic development,

who know something about job creation, who are involved in employment practice. It's a different group, and I think at the federal level can provide some of this; but I think the State could also offer not help in how to write a grant proposal but someone who can say from a technical point of view, if you're going to start a farming project in Livermore, these are the kinds of people that need to help you in the development of that. And you shouldn't have to rely in each area through the State to pull that together, because many of these small groups are not going to be able to do that.

I was also thinking that it would be helpful in the development of targeted assistance---committee, the one that's going to design these programs, if there could be some liaison to either the Assemblyman's office---so that---I think it's important from a prestige point of view, as well as from what that person understands about the---just the legalities. So we need attorneys, we need accountants, we need financial people in it. We need a group that has not been involved to this point in refugee resettlement. And anything that one can do to encourage that would be helpful.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Mrs. Allen?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I totally agree, and there is a revolutionary movement in job training taking place in California right now. It seems always if any movement are somewhat slow to the test that they have, that is the Job Training Act. It's a job training partnership act. And under that, the very things you're talking about is bringing government together in a partnership without a federal, state and local government or the

private industry for job training. And that revolutionary portion of it is where we are consolidating job training funds, vocational work experience and all those kinds of training funds. And I'm sure [inaudible]....think that there are people who see, certainly, because it's an interest of mine that we're working on---the job training aspect of legislation and it must be very, very shortly, that we are going to be involving ourselves in with the refugee for job training.

MR. NATHAN: Right. That'll be very helpful. There really is a need for new coalitions, and you can't make this work with just one organization whether it's a pick or a job training or the private sector.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. NATHAN: Thanks.

MR. VUONG: Miss Kathy Vida, Refugee Coordinator from Alameda County Department of Social Services?

MS. VIDA: Good morning. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Good morning.

MS. VIDA: In Alameda County the Social Services Agency is designated by the Board of Supervisors to act on its behalf in refugee affairs, and I appreciate this opportunity to come before you and share with you an Alameda County perspective on some of the problems in refugee resettlement process, as well as our recommendations for some policy directions.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: I think our audience is having trouble hearing.

MS. VIDA: Still can't hear? (someone makes suggestion to

adjust mike and another suggests to speak up.) Okay. For some of you who may not be real acquainted with Alameda County, since we kind of get covered up by San Francisco now and then, we are across the Bay Bridge, and we have both urban areas like the cities of Berkeley and Oakland and some suburban areas in Southern Alameda County in the Livermore Valley. The County has 1.2 million residents, an unemployment rate of 10% and a general welfare dependency rate of 7.3%. We have about 86,000 people receiving cash assistance payments in Alameda County.

Estimates of the refugee population residing in the County--- Bay area---range from 15,000 to 18,000, primarily Vietnamese, with approximately 80% residing within the City of Oakland. Unfortunately, that 9,000 or an estimated 50% to 60% of these refugees are receiving some form of cash assistance through our agency, and that represents 10.6% of our total recipient population in the County. Over 23% of the refugees receiving aid are time-expired, and this number has tripled in the last six months, and we anticipate it will keep increasing.

Obviously, county government has a heavy financial obligation and investment to the financial support of all of its [inaudible].... whether they're refugees or not, as long as they're unemployed and without resources.

For a very wide range of health, human and other services, county government either through direct service provision or through contractors is the provider of last resort, and we have to fulfill all these obligations, as you are well aware, with increasingly limited resources. So, it's a concern that the

refugee population has such a high welfare dependency rate and that to support this dependency rate requires an increasingly disproportionate share of the County's limited resources. We don't want to forget the federal responsibility for helping with our financial needs, but it seems that they're going to be forgetting about their responsibility to us, and we feel that we are the bottomline provider.

I think that these facts and figures have established why the County has been interested for a very long time in both federal and state resettlement policy. Alameda County has actively demonstrated their interest since 1975. The Social Services Agency has participated in providing direct services, employment, vocational training services, and we, of course, have provided mandated cash assistance and social services. Since 1981 we've been increasingly active in facilitating the community movement toward what we think is an appropriate goal and that is a goal of comprehensive and integrated service to liberate your refugees within our community.

Although we may feel there aren't enough resources for refugees in comparison to their need, there is a relative wealth of resources, both interested providers, targeted assistance, some social service monies, and we feel that we need to maximize those resources while they're available to us and not waste them.

We facilitated the mainstreaming more involvement of the Employment Development Department into our system by participating in the Employment Assistance for Refugees Project that was authorized by the Budget Control Language in Fiscal '81-82.

Despite over this eight-year involvement in the refugee resettlement process, many times counties, and particularly county welfare departments, are the "new kids on the block" in the refugee resettlement process, and we're frequently criticized for probably causing high welfare dependency rate among refugees. There seems to be some feeling in some interest group sectors within the refugee resettlement process that the fact that refugees have welfare eligibility somehow encourages their welfare dependence. And we feel that that's a very simplistic response to the problem of welfare dependency. It is true that in California we have fairly high benefit rates, but we also have very low numbers of entry-level positions, particularly in Alameda County, that are available for the refugee population right now, and we find that the majority of refugees really are in need of intensive services to assist them to enter even those few entry-level positions that are available.

We don't believe that high refugee welfare dependency is caused by any one agency or any one sector. We do feel, however, that the whole problem is escalated by the fragmentation that we see in the refugee service delivery system and in the management of the entire refugee resettlement process. We see different sectors, ourselves included, competing for control of funds and for control of the process. And I think that already today and by the end of the day all of the testimony will validate that. We all lack consensus in what the problems are and how they should be resolved.

I think that if there are any solutions to the welfare

dependency issue and to the fragmentation of the service delivery system and management systems, that those must evolve at the local level through local leadership and through local partnerships or coalitions of the public, private, voluntary and refugee sectors. These effective local partnerships, integrated local service delivery systems and effective response to the problems that we have can't be legislated by your group---I don't believe. I think you can legislate guidelines, but the process has to be a living one that exists at the local level. However, I think that there are things that your group can do to foster the evolution of this kind of partnership at the local level, and that's the direction that we suggest that any of your policy recommendations would take, particularly in regard to the Budget Control Language. We would ask that there be maximum flexibility for leadership through the board of supervisors and for integration and control of the funds at the local level.

For Alameda County, specifically, we are not interested in delivering the services ourselves. We feel that there are better, less expensive, more effective ways of delivering services available in the community, but we do feel that the county government, with its broad concerns, its concern with integrating with all the mainstream delivery systems---the JTPA, EDD, the education sector---that that kind of general scope is necessary for successful refugee resettlement process.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Do you have any suggestions for how we might encourage cooperation instead of competition between the social service agencies and the voluntary agencies?

MS. VIDA: I think if there could be some role clarification. I know one of the problems that escalates the whole situation is the fact that the VOLAGS' funding is dependent on the number of arrivals that they settle in a particular area. We would like to see their base of funding broadened to recognize that we need VOLAGS to help the time-expired refugees who are living in California and, perhaps, there is something that you could do at the national level to sway the national VOLAGS to recognize the needs of the local VOLAGS. Just a suggestion.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Doris?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I think I hear you saying, basically, that when you're talking partnership language much like [inaudible].... of national, state, local, but putting the control at the local level. I agree. From what I've observed so far, at least, that the competitions for funding is also putting fragmentations and also if there is a conflict which is not going to be seriously, efficiently or even effectively for our refugees.

Perhaps, and I don't want to put words in your mouth, but perhaps what you're saying is that we should, and Senator Carpenter should, recommend control---budget control language to the end of a partnership situation between---in some manner just---much like that, though, where we do have that control language to include VOLAGS in some type of planning and working together situation with the agency at the local level. And I [inaudible].... so strongly that, and I think to effectively and cost effectively as well, service---the needs that are out there---that that's something that we might and should be recognized.

MS. VIDA: Right. That's the direction that I'm heading. We feel a lot of the competition and for controlling funding is escalated by the fact that you make very general kinds of program decisions about target populations and allowable services at the state level. This past year, when we were able to assess our own service needs, we did fund mental health in the East Bay, and I think that kind of recognition at the local level is easier for us, because we have all the local community participation, and difficult for you to do when you have all these unique kinds in California.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: I've heard a great deal about the competition between the VOLAGS and the community service agencies, but one of the earlier witnesses testified there's really a third party in this equation as well. I think the refugees deserve a significant voice in what is happening to them.

MS. VIDA: That's correct.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: And I don't think we should lose sight of that as we worry about who the dominant agency might ought be.

MS. VIDA: It is true that the fragmentation ends up hurting the refugee most of all.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Certainly.

MS. VIDA: And I think at the local level, we can more easily mobilize the refugee participants in our community who can help us in the service delivery system.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Okay, our next speaker is Mr. Ron Rowell, Director of the Greater Bay Area Refugee Health Council.

MR. ROWELL: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of the Joint Committee. My name is Ron Rowell, and I'm speaking on behalf of the Greater Bay Area Refugee Health Council of which I am a Co-Chair. The Council is composed of a group of concerned public and private health providers from the six Bay Area counties as well as Solano and Monterey. It was formed to address the issue of unmet health needs in the various ethnic and geographic refugee communities.

We are concerned today primarily with what we see as a decreasing commitment to providing refugees with access to needed and appropriate health care. The reasons for this are several:

- The federal government in its desire to see refugees placed in jobs and off of public assistance has focused its attention primarily on employment services in the most literal sense.
- As resources become more scarce, refugee services find themselves in the position of competing fiercely for funds, placing health in competition with mental health, employment and competition with English language training and so forth.
- The numbers of newly-arrived refugees have declined significantly over the past year and a half.

Naturally, we all want to see the refugees become economically self-sufficient as soon as possible. Obtaining a job requires that a person be healthy. Most refugees have come from long stays in large refugee camps where only the most basic medical care can be offered. The health status in the home countries of the majority

of refugees is significantly below that of the U.S. because of poor nutrition, tropical disease and inadequate health and dental care. Add to this the trauma of escape, and it's not surprising that not all refugees arrive in the U.S. in excellent physical shape, not to mention the scars on their psyches.

While almost no refugees arrive in the U.S. with contagious diseases, many are suffering from chronic illness. Allow me to cite the findings of the Refugee Screening Clinic in San Francisco as an example. From a sample of 15,000 refugees, they found the following prevalence of diseases:

- 1.) dental caries - 100%
- 2.) intestinal parasites - 55%
- 3.) anemia - 27%
- 4.) positive tuberculosis skin tests - 30% with a 2% or 3% active case rate
- 5.) positive hepatitis B surface antigens - 19%

Other diseases seen less often were malaria, leprosy, trachoma, cholera, typhoid, lung flukes, thyroid abnormalities, renal disease, congenital heart disease and rhumatic fever. Not included in their study were other chronic conditions requiring treatment which can interfere with work: chronic ear infections, cleft palates, speech and hearing difficulties.

What about the children who make up almost half of all refugees? They have a variety of health problems which need attention, but they are not employable. What about pregnant women who are at high risk? They are also not employable, but should their well-being be ignored?

The problem is not that we do not have enough doctors, nurses, clinics or hospitals---we have more than enough. The problem is that refugees do not have access to these resources because they are unable to communicate effectively with the health care providers. The way to provide access is to train and employ medical interpreters in the refugee languages. This is what many agencies in the Bay area have done, and it is what is known as "health access" in refugee service jargon. Now, however, budget cuts, both by the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the Centers for Disease Control, has slashed the number of interpreters available drastically.

And I wanted to add something that a gentleman said earlier about the defund, upfund cycle. It has been our experience that what happens is our funds get slashed drastically, and then three or four months later down the line, somebody comes up and says, oh, we're going to....we have a problem here, you know. These people have been defunded so much so then we get....somebody steps in and upfunds us again, so we're constantly faced with losing trained staff. It's been, you know, quite amount....large amount of time training these people, and then we lose them, and we destroy staff morale, and then we have to upfund again.

In San Francisco, for example, there are now only enough interpreters to cover the Refugees Screening Clinic at San Francisco General Hospital. Until April 1st, the beginning of the new fiscal year for refugee programs, there were interpreters available to a network of public and private clinics covering all levels of care including dental care. By not providing adequate

funds for interpreters, the resources dependent upon those interpreters are no longer available. And I may say that those kinds of resources are large and you think of the dental schools in San Francisco who put their---who added to the effort to provide care for refugees and all of those different hospitals and clinics who agreed to serve refugees if we would provide interpreters. You have a small amount of money maximizing much larger resources.

In smaller communities where the number of interpreters were already very few, the problems are compounded by the fact that there is now a greater variety of refugee languages required than before. We're beginning to see a lot more Ethiopians, Afghans, Poles and assorted East Europeans, and these people, because they are legal refugees, also deserve and require the same service that Southeast Asian refugees require and deserve. This has put administrators in a position of facing laying off Southeast Asian interpreters in order to serve non-Southeast Asian refugees.

Health should not be forced to compete with necessary employment service, English language classes or mental health services for funds. Health is too basic to the well-being of all of us to be placed in this position. It is an absurd idea to force the refugee community to choose between learning English and getting well.

While it is true that the numbers of refugees coming into the U.S. have declined, it is also true that many California communities have large populations of refugees, many of whom are not yet proficient enough in English to tackle a medical situation. Most will eventually speak English at a level which will no longer

require interpretation. A few may never. However, the kind of technical competence required in English at this level is barely sophisticated.

Allow me to share one recent example with you of the kind of problem we face. A Mien interpreter was assisting with a family planning class in San Francisco where the subject of contraceptives was being discussed. At one point, the public health nurse was curious how the word IUD was being translated literally into the Mien language. The interpreter told her that there was no word in the Mien language for IUD so he had described it as a plastic boat. As you can see, medical interpretation is not simply speaking another language but translating entire foreign concepts; in effect, creating a new vocabulary entirely.

Most refugees are untrained in anatomy and physiology and are unfamiliar with Western ideas about the origins of disease and the functions of bodily systems. Acting as an interpreter in these situations requires a particularly well-trained and culturally sensitive individual as well as sensitive health care professionals.

When no interpreters are available in a medical situation the results can be disastrous. One story from Oakland was of a refugee who went to the local hospital emergency room with a bad cough. He was unable to communicate with the nurse on duty who simply saw that he was a refugee and thought he wanted a health screening. He was given a bottle of clear liquid in which to deposit a stool sample. He, on his part, thought the nurse had understood his problem and had given him medicine for his cough.

Luckily, the man thought to ask his volunteer agency case worker about the liquid he had been given. It turned out to be quite toxic.

In San Jose, a refugee lost his job due to illness, became despondent, committed suicide, and his entire family went on welfare.

On the positive side, a young Lao boy recently was referred to the U.C. Medical Center for testing on his hearing since he had been unable to hear all of his life. He was tested, and it was determined that all he needed was a hearing aid. To test the hearing aid, the doctor, with the interpreter's assistance, requested the mother to stand behind her son and call his name. The boy turned around all of a sudden with eyes wide open at hearing his mother's voice for the first time. The entire room, needless to say, was in tears.

In another case, a child who had been afflicted with polio in Vietnam had gone untreated before coming to the U.S. She was referred to Shriner's Hospital and interpreters were made available. The child learned to walk though with some difficulty. The physician stated that if treatment had been delayed one more year, the child would never have walked.

There is another access issue which concerns us, and that is that refugees are ineligible for Medi-Cal during the first month of residence due to the resettlement and placement grants they receive from the VOLAGS. This often means that refugees must wait a full month before being able to obtain health care. In some instances, this wait can result in more complex health problems

which are obviously more expensive to treat. It also means that in those counties who had committed themselves to providing initial screening, there is no reimbursement available, creating even further financial strains on the already overburdened county hospitals and clinics.

On a nationwide basis, there is no standard screening protocol for the physical screening of refugees who arrive in the United States. In some communities, a simple TB skin test is referred to as screening. In many communities in California, luckily, there is a more detailed physical examination given to all refugees, and then follow-up care is given as indicated.

Finally, mental health services for refugees are woefully inadequate. Even where the initial problem of finding refugees who have the proper training or the training of para-professionals has been possible, the funding for these is almost nonexistent.

We would like to make the following recommendations to you for your serious consideration:

- 1.) Health should be made a clear ongoing priority in refugee resettlement.
- 2.) There should be a set-aside of funds for the provision of health care and health access services.
- 3.) Refugees should be presumed eligible for Medi-Cal the first month of arrival.
- 4.) Health screening should be offered according to a nationwide standard protocol to insure proper monitoring.
- 5.) Mental health/cultural adjustment services should be given the importance they deserve, and funds for these

services should not depend upon the gutting of health services.

Thank you very much for your attention.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: The access problem is a problem that certainly isn't unique to the refugee community. It's a.....

MR. ROWELL: Obviously, it's quite a problem.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER:certainly it's a larger.....

MR. ROWELL: Problem, yeah.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Do you think that the HMO concept might be one that would be adaptive to the refugee community? Would this deal with that access problem?

MR. ROWELL: I think it could. I certainly don't see why not. I've kind of been waiting to see HMOs that already exist step in and try to become more creative in their approach to serving these limited or non-English speaking communities. It's been my experience, locally, in going and trying to develop a network of hospitals who will help provide trained interpreters on their own, because we're not going to be around forever, that their point of view is we can't get reimbursed for them; therefore, we're not interested. So, unless the patient, whether refugee or otherwise, unless they can bring their own interpreter, or unless they themselves can pay for it out of pocket, most hospitals are not interested. That's not entirely true. There have been one or two exceptions.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: The advantage---one of the advantages of an HMO would be that they would presumably have interpretation services available.....

MR. ROWELL: Well, I would presume---if they wanted to serve this particular population they would have to, sure.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Sure. Doris?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I serve on the Health Committee as well, and I can tell you that there is a bill right now to require hospitals to provide interpreters. However, [inaudible]...city that, that financial burden on one segment of enterprise, and there [inaudible]...commitment in helping [inaudible]...that should be [inaudible]...addressed by society as a whole, not just one segment of society. I would say that, hopefully, when we talk about budget control language and other things that we're talking about for partnership and responsibility and application of our policies, and applying it to services for the refugees, perhaps if we get to that point, we can have our VOLAGS coordinated with the agencies and refugees and government. We could, perhaps, set up a system wherein there could be more volunteer-type of organization or interpretation. Perhaps, through the work experience program---on testimony, again, down south---the refugees themselves have applied saying that they want the work experience. They want it as soon as possible even on a long period basis as part of getting into the mainstream of [inaudible]...and learning
(?) the natural language, learning a natural feel, to be part of that work experience but to be productive as well as [inaudible]... help solve some of our problems. I think that there ought to be ways in which we can approach the problems if we all start working together and put our minds together and our resources together.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you for being with us this morning.

We've been joined by Assemblyman Art Agnos---welcome---who's also the Vice Chairman of this committee.

MR. VUONG: Our next speaker is Miss Nguyen Moc Lan. And we also, we have [inaudible]....we have 43 list of speakers with us today, so if we cut down to 5 or 6 minutes each people, [inaudible]....would greatly appreciate [inaudible].... Miss Lan.

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, committee members, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Nguyen Moc Lan. I am a refugee from Vietnam, and I am living in Hayward, California. I am here today to bring to your attention the condition of refugee women in the present refugee service delivery system.

As you well know, the Budget Control Language adopted by the California Legislature defines the priority groups to receive refugee support services. In this control language, first priority for services is for employable adult refugees. You cannot hear? (microphone adjusting)

I am here today to bring to your attention the condition of refugee women in the present refugee service delivery system.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Nope, it's still not working. (Suggestion that she talk louder) No, it doesn't seem to be alive.

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: I think Ron turned it off. (Laughter) (more adjusting - button turned on)

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: There we go.

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: Sorry for all this time. I am here today to bring to your attention the condition of refugee women in the present refugee service delivery system.

As you well know, the Budget Control Language adopted by the

California Legislature defines the priority groups to receive refugee support services. In this control language, first priority for services is for employable adult refugees who receive or are likely to receive cash assistance. The Budget Control Language clearly discriminates against refugee women, giving first priority for language and skill training to the men in the household.

Refugee women have been rejected from training programs on the basis of being less employable than their husbands or brothers, not because these women lack motivation---on the contrary. But because of child care problems, there is a lesser chance for them to remain in training and eventually take a job that they can keep.

Although the Refugee Act of 1980 states that women must be given the same opportunities as men to participate in training and instruction, in reality, there are no existing child care programs for refugee children. Without providing support services to alleviate child care problems facing large groups of refugee women, there can be no equal opportunities in training programs.

Failure to help women receive language and skill training is, in my opinion, the greatest cause to foster dependency of these refugee women on the system for medical, legal, social services and public assistance.

I have two recommendations vis-à-vis the refugee women issue to make to this Joint Committee.

- First of all, the Budget Control Language must be changed to insure equal opportunities for women to participate in training programs, especially women with small children and infants.

-- Secondly, appropriate support services, such as child care, must be provided so that women are able to actually participate in training programs.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Unfortunately, we're in the middle of a battle in this country to get women to be treated like people, and that battle isn't going as rapidly as we would like sometimes, but thank you for pointing out to us that this is another battleground where we are not meeting our responsibilities adequately. Lucy?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Yes, just one question. If better opportunities were provided to women to work, if there within the community, in the refugee community, the kind of support [inaudible]....to encourage them to pursue that? In other words, is there a cultural [inaudible]....that also needs to be able to come to make them understand that they can be productive members of our work force?

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: Well, the problem is not with the women's [inaudible]....taking their child. These women want to give a hand. They want to learn English. They want to be independent. They want to be able to take their children to the hospital and not depend on an interpreter or take their children to school if there is a problem with children at school. It's (?) not acted properly, and I think these lack of resources for these women to be able to participate in language training.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: I guess part of---to the---added to the male members of their family, there isn't anyone there to

[inaudible]....also?

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: I cannot believe that is.....

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: They see that as a big problem. Give them the opportunity to make available for them.

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: Yes. I am convinced that if there are enough resources, these women would be able to participate in training and taking jobs as well.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Thank you. May I just ask a personal question? What is---what was---what is your training background? (?) You, obviously, are very---very forceful and a very primary spokesman for the women.

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: Well, since I came to this country, I have been involved in social work, and I am a social worker now working at San Francisco. Not in direct services, unfortunately, because of lack of funding. But I would like to devote more of my time in this [inaudible]....profession.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Miss _____, Assemblyman Agnos has a question.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Just one more question. Are you---are the women that you're referring to women who are single parent women or are they living with their spouse?

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: I am talking about all women.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Pardon?

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: All women.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: All women.

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: Single women or married women with

instance of small children.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Then, are you saying that married refugee women who have their spouses with them in this country with infants and young children want to go to work? Or are you saying they want the resources to learn to be independent in this country to go to places as you were suggesting like take their children to the doctor or schools and that kind of thing? Which is it? Or is it both?

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: I think it's both.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: It's both. What percentage or what portion of the women who are in this country are with their spouses of the refugees here? Do you have any notion of that? Are most of the refugee women without spouses or are they, or--- or they come here because their spouses---they were separated and their spouses didn't make it out or---do you have any notions about that?

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: I have no statistics at this time. But I do know there's a large population in San Francisco.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Of single-parent women with young children who want to work. That's understandable. The part I'm having difficulty in picking up on Assemblywoman Killea's notion is--- does the refugee woman who is with her husband and has young children want training to go to work or want training to become socially independent in the schools or the medical system or any of the other things that she may need to do to help her family?

MS. NGUYEN MOC LAN: I believe it is both. It is time--- these difficult times---it may not always be possible for the

husbands to find jobs. It is necessary in certain cases that women become the bread winners.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: I can understand that. And the reason I'm trying to zero in on this is because in the narrow or limited resources that we have, we have to make choices about training programs. I'm wondering where this would be on the priority list and that's why [inaudible]....^(?)focusing on my question, [inaudible]....women have the right to work. I'm just wondering at Miss Killea's suggestion whether we, in the resettlement program, we have enough people if we were aiming at a target population of married women with their spouses with young children in the refugee community. Would they freely respond to a work training program? I can understand they might try and---where they might respond to a social independence kind of training program as you were suggesting, and I'd like to hear from you or other people on that subject as we go on with the hearing. It's an interesting new facet for this hearing that I've not heard before. Thank you.

MR. VUONG: The next speaker is Mrs. Nguyen Thi Tam, the Senior Social Worker at the Center for Southeast Asian Refugee Resettlement in San Francisco.

MS. NGUYEN THI TAM: My name is Nguyen Thi Tam, and I am a senior social worker for the Center for Southeast Asian. I'm here to speak on---regarding the social service for the refugee.

Right now, the budget, the social service, has been cut off and, actually, we don't have it, funding, for this, but at the Center for Southeast Asian Refugee we are still in operation with two

part-time workers. In fact, I am at the Center only about 40% of the time, but I feel there is a need for it and that the Center cannot turn away this type of service. We operate in a neighborhood where a lot of refugees are living. We are in the Tenderloin, and we see them drop in practically everyday. Most of the problem---they come in crisis related. I'd like to mention some of the problems that, you know, seen on direct workers and I, you know, see everyday.

The majority of the refugees now seeking social services are less educated and less skilled and that's been the---the people who arrive previously. It will be necessary to work more intensively with them and top it that they suffer from the lack of many survival tools, such as sufficient foods, proper housing and clothing, adequate health care, and particularly, a discernable opportunity to break through the vicious circle of poverty, and you have seen many of them in the Tenderloin.

Each month we serve an average of 100 clients---this is only for two part-time workers---and mostly adults and about 10% the youth group. This is in addition of 60 cases we have in the preceding months, and out of the 100 cases we serve, 30% involve family violence---that is, battered wives and abused children. In fact, last month I had a couple cases of asserting the wife who was beat up, by the children, because of lack of money and food and everything and he was under a lot of pressure and he just, you know, beat her up.

So, this kind of services take a lot of time, neither worker.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: [Inaudible]....microphone, so people

can hear you much clearer.

MS. NGUYEN THI TAM: All right. And of the 25% were cases that concerned the legal problems. We have a lot of cases like you were talking about the woman that be left behind with no husband, and we've---a lot of cases she's had many children---average I would say from 5 to 6 children. And, again, I think we have young people, the youth, there is a problem with the law right now with many of them and, in fact, I visit a gentleman yesterday in court. He was in jail for almost a month, nobody knows he was there, and because he cannot relate both in Vietnamese or English, and it was shock to me when I came and talked to him---I suppose to be the interpreter, I suppose to speak Vietnamese to him and he looked at me and said, "I don't understand you." So, the lawyer, this public defendèr, asked me, "Then what do you say now? You want me to speak English to you?" And he said, "I don't get it either." So, the lawyer was kind of upset and told him that, "Man, you are illiterate!" And I'm shocked! I thought it was, you know, not very kind. But after I left him, I thought it over, is true that he's illiterate, both in English and Vietnamese. Because he came here when he was 14 years old. He spoke Vietnamese, but since that, he didn't have a chance to speak Vietnamese with his family. He's a street-wise kid. Just---he has no supervision from the parents. He came here with the grandparents. These are the---you know, the grandparents brought him here as a, you know, for charity or whatever it is. And he came here from Texas and then---he cannot---he hasn't learned English in school ever since he came here and this is about seven

months---seven years already. So, actually, he's in between both cultures.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: What does he say? What is he speaking in?

MS. NGUYEN THI TAM: He speaks only Vietnamese very limited, and he speaks English but just a street-wise language. He cannot understand regular English. I think eventually you will see these problems amount to [inaudible]...run away and who has a problem with the law, with family. I have seen in San Francisco---you---you know, there's nowhere to turn, and they join the gangs [inaudible]....

Of the cases, 45% cases may range from family dispute emergencies such as accidents, fires and severe illness and problem with the school where they have kids that truant, that run away or they cannot relate it to the parents or the beatings, or whatever it is, and with the police or with the landlord. In San Francisco we have a lot of that kind of problem---evictions and landlords and housing.

So, the nature of these kinds if often required technical knowledge and experience to handle them due to the limit skills and cultural background of the refugee. It is very important that the staff providing this service are well trained and multi-lingual.

Our agency has experience, and I think that for the time being---I'm here a lot of times---I don't know because of the agency keep saying that the funding will be cut off, you know, next month, next month. I feel there is a great need for it

because the refugees coming everyday. And---but we don't have the funding. So, I recommend that, you know, and I urge you to provide the funding for the social services because it's very vital, it's urgently needed and....I think that even with employment training, English training or any kind of service, if we don't provide it, the care for the family as a whole, and, you know, the refugees cannot move forward successfully.

And, secondly, I would like recommend at the hospitals, the school system and especially the police department. I work many, many times with the police department on the rape cases, you know, the refugees who are involved in this kind of problems, too. And should be---should hire bicultural and bilingual staff as a liaison with the refugees' community. Right now, they don't have it. In fact, the other day I came in to report a rape case, and the woman was waiting almost half an hour, and finally I help her to write up the report, hand it to the police, and he read it, and he said, "Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry. Would you come into the private room?" and begin to really, you know, speak with some kind of human treatment. These are the kind of cases I work everyday.

So, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Questions [inaudible]....

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I would only say that, you know, we've been hearing this talking earlier. We had a lot of testimony down south, again, about the communities, and it was marvelous to hear, quite frankly, that the refugees, on the most part, want to work as quickly as possible. They want to---even as in a work experience

program---they want to be able to come in and get into the main work force because of all the problems we're talking about today, and they have a work ethic. They want to work. And, you know, again, when we get into these situations of a work experience partnership between all the agencies, again, helping the---with the refugee in a work experience setting such as you have, obviously, become a very good social worker, where we can have these people learning trades who have been honest saying to them and [inaudible].... and asking of them to progress and just feel for the better through work experience.

I also heard much testimony that they want to be involved to help their own people, and I just really have confidence that if we handle this right, that we're going to be able to set up a system wherein all [inaudible]....to work together and, hopefully, cost effectively to provide all these services.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Just a second. When you were speaking about the man who was in jail for a month, no one---and he was in jail for a month because no one.....

MS. NGUYEN THI TAM: I don't know why that is. I---naturally because of the confidential thing, and I'm still working on the case right now.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Are you---I mean, we, you know, in San Francisco pride ourselves on liking jail system and liking sheriff, and I find it hard to believe that someone would let somebody stay in jail for a month.....

MS. NGUYEN THI TAM: Number one, because this is a lack of resource and lack of information. This man is actually---he came

from Texas, and we just got called yesterday, you know, that he's here, and the public defender called me and try to communicate.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Has the Senator, has the Senator.....

MS. NGUYEN THI TAM: In fact, he's still in jail by now because, again, the lack of resources. We have.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: But it's not because he won't talk to them [inaudible]....jail for a month he doesn't [inaudible]....to talk to.

MS. NGUYEN THI TAM: It's possible, because he never expressed that he---they assumed that he speak Vietnamese very well, that's why they called for us, and when I tried to interpret him, the court order, and he said, "What are you saying? I don't understand Vietnamese" and finally, I said, "Then I let the public defender speak English to you" and I said, "Do you understand?" He said no. So, again, I have to go with him, by describing the action itself instead of just saying it in Vietnamese.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Have there been any efforts to contact the Civil Rights Commission as sort of a central clearing house for these kinds of issues that could then reach out to the San Francisco General Hospital, the Sheriff's Department and other city agencies where these cases might occur so that they would have the contact like your center.....

MS. NGUYEN THI TAM: I think that would be great if we had
(?)
the resource for temporary housing for these drifter who came here and that, you know, we are not able to make immediate plan but that he has no relatives, no friends here. And, that's it.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Do you know if there's any central clearing

(?)
house like the Civil Rights Commission that's axed as the contact
whom other city agencies have a refugee who is having trouble
because of their lack of understanding of the system or the language
that [inaudible]....touch with them? (cross talking)

MS. NGUYEN THI TAM: I don't know. But even there is---an
agency like this, the access is very important. I think that we....
they don't know how to go there yet. They're not familiar with
the system yet. So, again, orientations for---we have a
[inaudible]....I work---I'm just here to present direct, you
know, cases, that's all because---and I have seen cases briefly
involved with the legal problem which is very simple, but, again,
they don't have it, the proper orientation. Like a shoplifter
who walk in the department store and he's---she's not supposed
to take the thing from, let's say, the first floor up to the
second floor, and immediately she's arrested for shoplifting.

(?)
ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I had a question on her saying why
is the public defender knows about, you know, let's say she's
[inaudible]....sheriff [inaudible]....agency, why hasn't that
been pursued through those avenues to find some way that you
can't understand anything that they have pursued diligently by
someone who can. I agree. (cross talking)should have heard
by now (cross talking) to understand that you can have it.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Thank you, Miss Tam.

MS. NGUYEN THI TAM: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Next witness is---I guess we have two---
Camelia---Miss Camelia Gold and Miss Kathleen Hamilton from YMCA
Refugee Services.

MS. GOLD: My name is Carmela Gold from the YMCA Refugee.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Got to talk more into the mike.

MS. GOLD: This one? My name is Carmela Gold, and Kathleen Hamilton and I represent YMCA Refugee Services. There's two separate programs. I'm the coordinator of the food service training program which provides training in job placement for entry-level positions in local food service industries.

I would like to address the specific obstacle for our job developer and other job developers for refugees. That is, that the recipients of cash assistance, RCA or AFDC, are, in fact, discouraged from working by the current welfare system. Entry-level salaries are often lower than welfare benefits, and this seems, to me, is certainly the problem on the overall system and a real frustration for the refugee.

I'd like to recommend that the State examine the issue and consider legislation to provide more incentives for refugees to accept entry-level positions as a step towards self-sufficiency.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Thank you, Miss Gold. Miss Hamilton?

MS. HAMILTON: Good morning committee members and ladies and gentlemen. I'm coordinator of the ESL program at YMCA Refugee Services. And our program is designed to serve refugees with little or no formal education. We serve all of the Southeast Asian refugees that have been spoken about today, in addition to some Ethiopian and recently some Rumanian refugees.

The objective of our program is to place---eventually place---refugees in mainstream educational resources throughout the city. Once they have completed our program, they're able to do this.

There are many students, though, who are not able to take advantage of our program for one reason or another and have to struggle for a long time in the community college system, trying to get ahead in their command of the English language.

Recently, we've suffered a drastic funding cut of about 67%, and the impact that that's had on our program is as follows:

- We've lost 30% of our bilingual staff. In June, another 20% will be laid off.
- We have no staff training, and no consultants can be hired to continue our high standards of education.
- Our program supplies have been cut to a minimum---mostly paper supplies.
- As the administrator of the program, I'm also required to teach, so we don't have any full-time administrator.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of these funding cuts is we're now funded only to serve 50% of the refugees that we formerly funded. Our program has just about been cut in half in terms of the people that we can serve.

We've been a center of refugee resources at the YMCA for about two years. Our program, specifically, has been in existence for two years. And this is a place that refugees can come, not only for ESL assistance, but, in addition, all of the extra kinds of concerns and problems that they have in terms of legal assistance, assistance in schools, personal problems, emergency intervention, all of the kinds of things that are---our bilingual teachers can help them with in addition to their ESL concerns.

I'd like to mention that I feel that our program is definitely

an asset to the State of California. I think without our program that there will be an additional burden of expense placed on the systems that are already in existence. If our students don't have even a functional command of the English language, I think that all of the state-run systems will have to have additional interpreters; their progress through those systems will be painstakingly slow; they'll have to spend longer time in community college districts; and they'll, in general, not be able to get for themselves the kind of services they need.

I would just like to say in conclusion that I've worked with refugees for three years, and prior to that, I lived in Asia for three years. I think I understand their cultural values, and I feel that they are placed in a position of having to have an extra burden of shame by being so dependent on all of the kinds of state-run agencies that help them. I, myself, know that they want to work. They want to be productive citizens, they want to contribute to our society. So, I'm hoping that you'll give them a chance to do so.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Thank you, Miss Hamilton. Questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Yes. I just wanted to make one quick comment, because I'm sure it wasn't intended this way, but the
(?)
certain of those who are going out into the low-paying jobs, starting out, say they happen to be someone with a family, 5 or 6 or 7 people dependent on him. It's that job that doesn't provide the resources for them, it's not the welfare system's paying them too much. Because [inaudible]...I'm sure that that's not

what you intendend. (cross talking)

MS. HAMILTON: I'm sure Carmela would like to clarify that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: But we do hear that. That we're paying too much with welfare, therefore they're not going to work. And, of course, I know that these people, particularly, that they do want to get out and work and I just---be sure that that wasn't misunderstood.

MS. GOLD: Yeah. What I'd like to say is that, basically, there're not that many training programs and if a refugee wants to---now they need to be in programs, but they choose our program. We're very---we pride ourselves very [inaudible]....by what we can offer them for a job to support their families because it is so little.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Okay, thank you very much. Oh, I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Again, because I've had the opportunity to be in another hearing in a different part of the State, I can tell you that there was a suggestion made for more portion of the State regarding that [inaudible]....job entry and that the income is usually not enough for a family of ten to go off of welfare and---because you lose more than just cash assistance, you lose the medical for the ten people in the---for Medi-Cal. And one of the suggestions made by, again, the refugees in that area was that to assist them into the work force that perhaps some separation of cash assistance and medical assistance could take place at that---as an incentive for them entering the job market and then for a period of time allowing them to stay on the medical assistance until they get into another---and get for themselves into a higher

income that, again, secure their family according to a job where medical costs are---is part of the pay where they get some kind of medical assistance and are protected. So, I think it's something worth looking at to encourage them, because most of them---many of their psychological and mental problems are coming from just that---not being able to [inaudible]....to work and enter the mainstream.

MS. HAMILTON: Right. That seems like a very viable suggestion. Our concern is that refugees compare the immediate cash ramifications in their families, not thinking about the long-term effect it would have in terms of them refusing an entry-level job at the point in time that they're at presently and, so, we feel that some adjustment is necessary to correct this---this misinterpretation of what is actually going to happen to them.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Okay, thank you. Next witness is Mr. Thoi?

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, committee members, my name is Nguyen Van Thoi, and this is my pleasure to address you today as the Chairperson of the Indochinese Housing Development Corporation.

Before I go into what I'm going to say, I want to join the previous speakers in congratulating you for your sensitivity and leadership by having a refugee staff on your committee and also by holding a series of hearings like this while we have the opportunity to address our concerns.

The Indochinese Housing Development Corporation is a community-based, non-profit organization located in San Francisco.

We were established in 1981 to address the housing needs of people residing in the Tenderloin area of San Francisco, with an emphasis of servicing the Southeast Asian people. We are currently involved in the management and ownership of an 82 unit apartment building of which 85% is occupied by refugees. We are in the process of converting the ownership and management of that building into that of a tenant owned and operated cooperative.

The I.H.D.C. believes that the provision of housing needs is not limited to the physical placement of a roof over a person's head. Rather, this involves the development and assessing of other services which enhance the quality of life of the tenants. In our work, we are able to see the strong interconnection between the provision of culturally relevant services and the refugees' ability to develop economic and social self-sufficiency.

I came here today to address two issues. The first is that of the State's refugee management system, the Office of Refugee Services. The second is that of the Southeast Asian community growth and participation in the society.

First of all, the three levels of administration---the federal, the state, the local---the Office of Refugee Services has the direct responsibility of the management of the programs serving refugees. In our work with various levels of administration, we are distressed to find that the Office of Refugee Services which manages the largest refugee budget in the nation is the only level of administration where refugees are not a part of it's own staff. This is an irony given the nature of the charge of management given to that office. Even at the federal level, the Office of

Refugee Resettlement, and the local Department of Social Services, not to mention the Joint Legislative Committee on Refugee Resettlement and Immigration, have refugee staff---which we are very proud.

In our opinion, this is a gross error on the part of the State O.R.S. They are committing an unjustifiable oversight in the staff selection. They have ignored the primary source of expertise available to the State. We feel strongly that the refugees or former refugees need to become a part of the planning and administrative staff in order to develop available and effective programs of services for the refugees.

The second issue is that of the Southeast Asian community growth and participation in society. Our community is in a state of flux. We are attempting to develop economic and social self-sufficiency. We are ready and anxious to participate in the role of California's society. After eight years of residing in this State, a large numbers of us have developed skills needed to help shape our new society. As professionals, para-professionals and lay people, we want to take an opportunity to play the role in the building if California. As the newest residence of this State, we are building new types of roots in California. Already a large number of us have become citizens, taxpayers, business owners and workers. We see California as our new home. We feel that we can bring to California our strength, our culture, as responsible citizenry. The cultural richness present in California can only be enriched by the presence of Southeast Asian residents.

Mr. Chairman, committee members, I believe that the time has come for us refugees to speak out on issues that directly govern

our lives, to organize ourselves not only for our immediate survival but also for our future development, self-sufficiency and security; to assume greater responsibility in formulation and implementation of refugee policies; to participate in the mainstream of American economic, cultural, social and political life.

I would like to suggest to you that there is a real possibility to achieve this goal. Right now, eight counties in California is scheduled to receive \$21 million for targeted assistance money. I have two suggestions to make about the use of this money.

First of all, the money should be used to develop new and innovative programs that not only help refugees now but can also develop a group of leaders in our community who will carry on the work once the money is already spent. Please do not allow the counties to use this to implement their own programs that leave no foundation for our development of our community.

Second, it should be used to fund programs that are Asian developed or run by refugees, or at the very least, programs that use refugees in the positions of influence.

Twenty million dollars is a lot of money, but it is also a one-shot deal. I hope that you will direct the O.R.S. office to use this in such a way that [?]us can achieve the greatest and longest lasting effectiveness for the refugee community.

And thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Mr. Thoi, have you been stealing my speeches? (Laughter)

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: Actually, this was your [inaudible].... for today, but the last minute I heard about it and so I.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Mr. Thoi, just for the record, would you kindly tell the committee how the Housing Development Corporation was started and what it has accomplished [inaudible]....

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: Yeah. Actually, we work.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: [Inaudible]....now.

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: Right. Before.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: [Inaudible]....

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: Right. There is a big housing problem in San Francisco due to the shortage of housing, the cost of the range--- it's too expensive, so and so forth. We are a group of concerned people involved---several other social services get together with---and we form the Indochinese Housing Development Corporation. And with the help of the [inaudible]....money from charitable foundations which start up close to \$5,000, we are managed to bought a 1.6 million building.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: So, the \$5,000 will make the down payment on a \$1.6 million building?

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: Actually, with \$5,000 is the start-up money which allow us to work, preparation work, and we were able to [inaudible]....additional \$800,000 to put as a down payment of the building, and the goal of I.H.D.C. is that we understand the tenants are the best person to govern their own life within that particular building. So.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: How many apartments are there in it?

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: There are 82.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: 82 apartments.

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Okay. One, two bedrooms, three bedrooms?

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: Most likely studios in this---in Tenderloin neighborhood is very hard to find a large apartment.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: How does it work? People rent?

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: Yeah. People renting it. Right at this moment, we are trying to convert the apartment---the ownership and management of that apartment building to the tenants.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Who's doing that?

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: We are doing it. The I.H.D.C. conversion.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Corporation, which is refugee developed and run.

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: And, are there other services that help the people live there, to make the adjustments that we were talking about are necessary for them to assimilate into American society and all that?

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: Yeah, there are a wide range of services being served---provided to those tenants, because we believe that, you know, the housing problem is related, inter-related, with other services, and the well-being or the quality of the life of the tenants is involved with other areas. So, fortunate enough, we got this support from the Center for Southeast Asian Refugee Resettlement in terms of providing supportive services.

(?)
ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Did you break out on the \$800,000? Where did that come from?

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: With the \$800,000 of which \$400,000

come from Mayor Office of Economic Development and the remaining \$400,000 is come from Franciscan Charity which is a private foundation.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Just one comment. I think certain (?) parts you're recommending was tried when other various countrymen I think very successfully in producing many leaders in the minority community are a lot of city programs---sub-year contracting for the Black communities, for Spanish communities and also some of the other minorities. We developed some real leadership that were then able to come into the mainstream. There were problems with those programs---we were learning. But I think we can look to that as a way for which to apply to our---the refugees as our newest of arrivals and the ones that need to establish themselves too. So, certainly what you're suggesting in a sense is not new () that the [inaudible]....payment of and other programs to sell for their [inaudible]....but it's not easy to do as you well know. And, I certainly commend you for what you're doing. I think it's a way [inaudible]....

MR. NGUYEN VAN THOI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Thank you, Mr. Thoi. Next witness is Mr. Chuong?

MR. CHUONG: Mr. Vice Chair, members of committee, May, 1983 marks the eighth year of Southeast Asian refugee admission to the United States. And staggering between accomplishments and unsolved problems, resettlement programs and policies need to be improved and updated to meet the changing characteristics of the newcomers.

Given the time constraint of this process, my testimony will center around two issues---the educational needs of the refugee children and the subject of community involvement in policy-making and implementing processes.

Needless to say that refugee children often make headlines in various daily publications. The latest feat was winning the Spelling Bee Contest---that's the issue of Examiner, April 28, 1983. The success stories, however, do not reflect the true picture of the struggling newcomer children.

In 1981, a survey conducted by the Bilingual Department of San Francisco Unified School District found that we have 900 youngsters who are non-literate or pre-literate. 494 of these children come from Southeast Asia. The continuation of this study show the numbers increasing to 1,320 students who fit this category.

Educating these children to become productive citizens will require the involvement and participation of trained bilingual and bicultural personnel in the field of literacy and language arts. The demand for an appropriate methodology could be illustrated by the following example: Imagine yourself having to give directions of how to get there to a non-literate person. In this process, you cannot use street names or other relevant numbers since he or she is unable to read them. I do not have to point out that in this highly mobile society, to get around is part of the survival process for newly arrived refugees.

This does not suggest that this particular group cannot learn, but they need to learn differently. An indepth understanding of their characteristics---for instance, cognitive skills, perception

and affective domain---is needed to focus on appropriate strategies and methodologies.

For this, I would like to make the following recommendations:

- A) A comprehensive teacher training program.
- B) Sound recruitment plan to insure the participation of Southeast Asian.
- C) An after-school program to supplement the regular school instruction.
- D) Counseling component to assist in career orientation.

Moving on to the second part of my testimony, I would like to retrieve a segment from a report to Congress presented by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of the Refugees Affairs, published in 1979, which said:

The future will be provided for the refugees by the refugees, not by the Americans. And that future can only hold hope for them if we give them the knowledge of the subtleties and nuances which provide the attitudes of success. We must not give them second-class citizen attitudes or ethics.

It was a heartening expression of concern over the self-sufficiency goal for each and every refugee. However, little has been done to ensure this process. The claim that there are very few qualified Southeast Asian professionals is no longer valid. In many agencies serving the refugee population, Southeast Asian workers still hold second-class citizen type of assignment. And at the policy-making level, little effort is being made to encourage community participation. It is true that refugee programs cost money. It is also true that for the past seven years, the productive segment of the refugee population have paid substantial amount of income tax to the federal government as well

as to the respective states of residence. A brief computation indicated if only 30% of the resettled 600,000 refugees paid only \$1,000 in income tax yearly for the last five years, we have contributed close to \$1 billion and thus have paid back the first two years of allocation since 1975. Short-term loan and high yield ^(?) indeed. It is time to have a remedial solution, and it's long overdue.

I would like to make the following recommendations:

- A) Agencies must make every effort to include Southeast Asian staff at the decision-making level.
- B) A comprehensive staff training program must be contained in each submitted proposal.
- C) Evaluation procedures must be part of any funding request in order to maintain the accountability aspect.
- D) Inclusion of Southeast Asian in policy-making bodies at both state and local levels.
- E) Surveys monitoring the efficacy and efficiency of programs must be established for adequate feedback from the recipients of services.

Thank you for very much for your attention and time.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chuong. Any questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: What is the success that you've had in your school district in having the---and the participation in the concerns of the child's education [inaudible]....education?

MR. CHUONG: Recently, in March 12 in 1983, we have, you know,

started a parent conference in which we have various groups coming in from the Southeast Asian. At this point is very difficult to get the parent participation, although is very important for them to be part of the, you know, to the education process. We have a lot of--the ethnic Chinese participated in [inaudible]....you know, the help from the local established community or the introducing into the process of participation. The Vietnamese-American is somewhat limited. We have---the parents that have participated so far have been in the productive side of, you know, the segment of the population. But we make every effort to reach out and to ask them to give us feedback and, you know, to help us in the particular information as far as learning style, for instance, and other affective domain that they, you know, concur.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Mr. Chuong, you're the first school official [inaudible]....I think we have had on our agenda today. I want to ask you a question. I remember when my mother and father were learning to become citizens [inaudible].... They went to a school for citizenship classes. Does our school---does our high school system offer citizenship classes?

MR. CHUONG: Oh yes, I think it's part of the requirement, so I think the youngsters who was enrolled regularly in the high school level has to go to about two semesters to three semesters of civics in which the process of document is being taught.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Is that preparing them to pass or to take the citizenship test?

MR. CHUONG: Not directly. I think it's somehow exposing them to the---in the government processes, but.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: How about parents?

MR. CHUONG: The parents, so far, have used some of the community agencies established primarily in the Chinahouse section, and they go to Sunday---or Sunday afternoon and, you know, take those citizenship courses which offer at some public library branches.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Does the school [inaudible]....

MR. CHUONG: Student at this point and time, no.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Pardon?

MR. CHUONG: (?)
The school at this point in time it's primarily, you know, deal with civics, and it's not directly to, you know, prepare them to be citizens. That's uh---I think.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: The reason I'm asking is there seems to be an era of [inaudible]....of monies that are being used for refugee services. It seems to me that some of them could be---some of the programs that these monies that we really need for them might be paid for by other agencies who have an area of interest or a responsibility. So it seems to me that the school board might want to set up citizenship classes for, say for, refugees to take. and thereby releasing that money that we're now using for citizenship tests.

MR. CHUONG: Yeah, I think [inaudible]....wholeheartedly support that kind of idea. A lot of these---I think, you know, there's a two-fold kind of result, you know, come from this kind of suggestion. Number one is the students who have undergone that kind of courses could go back into their particular family and help out with the elder members of---the older member of the

families. Number two, also, it's also supporting, you know, the civics that we are teaching right now at the high school level, and that kind of two-prong, we'll say, process would be very, very helpful.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Thank you. Let's see, this is Mr. Anh. Mr. Anh.

MR. NGUYEN KHOA THAI ANH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. What I would like to speak today have been mostly covered by my compatriots and other people in the community, but I'd like to present myself as not as a teacher in the open public school but as a member of the community---of the Indochinese community of that area.

You know the number of Indochinese refugee in America now reaches one million mark. In California, that number is more than 200,000. In San Francisco alone it's 35,000, and the last count in Oakland is 15,000. The statistics are staggering. Thank goodness, refugee hasn't become a household word, or has it?

Sometimes, through our noisy confusion, we heard about the refugee---notoriously, of course---but oftentimes they exist in our lives quietly, without making their presence felt.

I was answered at the door of an apartment/manager home in a small six-unit complex in L.A. last month by the manager. "There is no refugee living here. You must be looking at the wrong place." Then as I saw a "Nguyen" approaching the mailboxes, I perked up and the landlady exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Nugent!" N-U-G-E-N-T. But she speak perfect English, thank God---or should have.

Somehow, people perceive us differently. But we are no

longer fresh off the boat---monolingual---though many of us speak English with an accent and that's good, because it mean that we speak another language beside English. So when we speak English, our mother tongue is carried into it. At some point, our host culture has forgotten that we have adapted, that we have become integrated. We may crawl out of perceived mold, but deep down we are still a refugee. We still share many common traits, backgrounds, that a new arrival brings.

I am flattered and both the products of the American and Vietnamese cultures. For to be what I am today I should thank the culture that make me a part of it; namely, the American culture. This, many of my fellowmen would concur. But many of us who came here in 1975 are still being referred to as refugees. We are that to be sure, but sometime the term carries different connotations. Lest many of us would forget what we are, refugee means one who flees to a foreign country to escape danger, oppression and persecution or simply one who seeks refuge. To the Indo-chinese, their refuge is America. .

Although this is not exactly a land of "milk and honey," we have found a haven compared to the conditions in the land where we had come from. It is so, thanks to Americans like you, who accept us with open arms, who feed us, cloth us, see us through the good times and bad times and sometimes conquer those. They guide us through the mire of bureaucratic entanglements and obfuscated refugee policy, through down-turn economics. Yet, thanks to them we have survived. And I think that the credit should also go to the different VOLAGS and service providers who

were so creative, so flexible, to have survived through the advent
flow of different funding cycles. The noun that best describes
these qualities is tenacity. They hang onto us. What this would
carry and with a sense of [inaudible]....oblige, they bestow on us,
the poor helpless refugees, jobs, aid and assistance. Most
importantly, the different agency makes sure they are there when
we need them. Thus, their foothold is getting stronger and deeper,
all the while keeping a jealous and watchful eye on us for fear
we may make errors, stumble and fall. We are grateful, but it has
been eight long supported and nurturing years, and somehow, we
cannot rid ourselves of the notion that refugees can be best
served by refugees.

I know of a case where a Mien student was sent to different
psychologists and different services in the school. His teacher
shake him up a lot of times in telling us that he didn't do this
because he didn't know English but he just pretend. Later we
learned that the 14-year-old boy was never been to school in his
own country and, therefore, was not exposed to any formal education.

But, the sad fact is that many experts who profess to know
about the refugee are really the wrong person. I think we are at
the time where there's plenty of us around to serve these position.
especially when we were born in the same culture, share the same
language, understand each other hope, needs and fear. We all have
to go through the very same aculturation process. Isn't that your
goal, the State's goal and our federal government goal to make
the refugee independent, self-sufficient and self-reliant? It is
about time we make the transition from dependent to independent,

and it's not unlike the proverbial story of a mother who vows not to let her child get into the water until the child learns how to swim. I think the child should get in the water first, don't you? We are sometimes thought of thusly, but we are not all that bad. Most of us have gone through the ranks and files of different agencies and organizations in the social services, and we have learned the route. Surely, we have been given the chances but it's mostly the chance to be front-line workers, while the managerial positions are reserved for the Caucasians. We are confident that there are many capable and talented leadership in our communities who can serve efficaciously those functions.

I, myself, know of a Vietnamese who was offered a job as the director at the traditional Y agency, though he came on board as a co-director with another white. He was let go after three weeks for reason that things did not work out. Perhaps the reason that his being unfit for the job was more at his being unfit thing as a token director.

There are many approaches to letting the Indochinese become self-sufficient and self-reliant. The Mutual Assistance Association is among them, and it should be one of the most effective. Many Indochinese individuals, groups, have been doing their work quietly and without fanfare. In Oakland, we have organized soccer teams, who have helped the newcomers with the task of filling out paper at the Social Service Department. We have enrolled the children in the school, and all these were done quietly because believing in doing so, actions speak louder than words.

Perhaps they were done on a smaller scope and method because

they received no outside help. These individuals and groups should be sought out and assisted. The State and local government should bear the primary cost of getting them organized and incorporated. Other VOLAGS and service providers should accorded them with the existing infrastructure and expertise and in---to train the refugees in the managerial positions. This will be an effective strategy for the State and local government to implement, for it will be proven successful, we believe, both in terms of cost effectiveness and service rendered.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: It's easy to understand how people might be sensitive to being called refugees, but actually, unless you are an American Indian, all of us are either refugees or decedents of refugees. That's the way this country was settled by its acceptance and ways of immigrants who have escaped persecution in one country or another. And, I think the reason we have encouraged this kind of immigration over the years is the kinds of diversity that we have in the United States represents one of our strengths, and that's the context with which you are not only refugees but also Americans.

MR. NGUYEN KHOA THAI ANH: Yeah, I agree wholeheartedly with you on that point. Although my speech may sound with that kind of overtones, we are not---we don't feel inferior of being refugees, but---that's the part of being an American.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Right. And it's true that not every Southeast Asian speaks English the same way that everybody else does but then, have you every tried to understand somebody from

the Deep South? (Laughter) Their accents are distinctive, too. And that, too, is part of the pluralism in this country. Thank you for making your point.

MR. VUONG: [Inaudible]....Nguyen D. Tuan from San Francisco Community Mental Health Services?

DR. NGUYEN D. TUAN: Mr. Chairman and honorable members of the committee, I would like to thank the Joint Committee for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the refugee community. Instead of advocating for any one single and type of program, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you and to reiterate for you the perceptions and feelings about the values and aspirations of the newest refugees to this land. These perceptions come from my involvement as a volunteer over the past eight years with refugees, with various refugee groups and various refugee programs.

In majority, if not all, refugees want to make a new life for themselves and their loved ones in this society. Self-sufficiency is, as you've heard, one of the means that they see themselves--- as a means they see they need in order to achieve this goal. A cohesive, cultural and economic community from which refugees can draw help, support and understanding is another valued means towards establishing themselves or their roots in this society. And thirdly, role models of success within their own group and within their own community are the third ingredient in making this new group establish their lives here.

If you have time, I will invite you to walk through the Tenderloin area of San Francisco which is just a couple of blocks

from here. That area a couple of years ago used to be a [di]lapidated, depressed area, very typical of inner city America. Now, because of the refugees, there is an atmosphere of rebirth and growth. I'm not saying that it is the "Garden of Eden" or Mill Valley yet. But, what happened there and is happening still in the San Francisco Tenderloin area can be used to illustrate the positive contributions that refugees are making to the United States---in small ways, in gradual ways. And I would like to use that example and to illustrate the point that refugees are making their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to recreate a community of their own.

I think it is ultimately this kind of aspiration for self-sufficiency, self-respect and belonging that will determine the long-range success of the refugees as the new breed, the latest Americans.

You may then ask, what should be the policy guidelines for the deployment of refugee resettlement resources? Please allow me to suggest three recommendations, most of which have been mentioned at various times before and will probably be mentioned again throughout the hearings.

First, resources should not be spent for programs that ultimately foster dependency. Let me give you an example: There is now a proposal for various programs to establish case management. The concept of case management implies a differential and power situation where the worker or the professional knows best, and the person being managed have diminished mental and psychological, economic, emotional capacity for independent judgements. It is

really one step short of legal, total conservatorship. Refugees are basically denied, in some of those proposed programs, the ultimate judgement and decision about what course of action to take during that initial resettlement process. Such a practice is personally demeaning to the refugees, as individuals and as a group. I think it is contrary to the American spirit of freedom and liberty, and, I think it is socially counterproductive.

Because, essentially, the refugees are being trained to become psychologically and socially dependent on resettlement workers to make judgements for them as to what course they should take.

My second recommendation is to building evaluation time frames of concepts in programs. And the evaluations should be on the work of the programs in terms of their contribution to community development and leadership development within the refugee communities. By and large, programs that are targeted at helping refugees are still run by non-refugees. Policies governing these programs are still shaped largely without much input from the refugee community. I see some benefit in that type of situation up to this point, and I mention it to some of my friends before. I said one of the benefit is that so far the refugees have been spared the need to fight among themselves for power. But I think if this situation is allowed to continue, it will not help refugees in the long run. As special resettlement funding stops, which, I believe, it will eventually have to, the refugee communities will be left without indigenous leaders who are knowledgeable about the social, economic and political environments. And I think that would be a very sad fact.

My third recommendation is that California should spend refugees' assistance dollars like a wise investor. It is very tempting during this period of fiscal austerity and decreases in service funding to use the money to cover service program deficits. You will hear "please" for that all over the place. The Legislature will---and I'm predicting that the Legislature will feel the pressure brought on them to draft the Budget Control Language such that the block grant refugee money and other money could be spent in that manner---to cover up deficits. But I think the issue, given the short life of this kind of funding, is not how to stretch the dollar. The real issue is how to get the most yield out of the dwindling dollars in the long run. What is the most profitable investment of the dwindling funds? I respectfully submit that the best investment is to spend those kind of funds in programs that are community-run, that are targeted in building the economic and social self-sufficiency of the programs. Examples of that, for example, in the inner city is here, is the housing project. Then maybe other economic venture that could be developed, in consultation not with bureaucratic government employees but the business sector, to help refugees run their own affairs.

As a closing comment, I would like to paraphrase what a refugee fisherman said to his sponsor. "Please do not spend your money buying fish for me. I'd rather prefer you buy me a fishing pole, so I can do the fishing myself and earn my own living."

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: You make some very good points. I think that, obviously, you have the start of the in-migration. It would have been inappropriate to have had the refugee community

direct that program.

DR. NGUYEN D. TUAN: I would agree.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: But now we are in a state of transition and today, Vu-Duc is sitting here---in two or three years, Vu or somebody like Vu will be the Chairman of this committee which is as it should be. I think we're moving in the direction that we should be, and we appreciate your support [inaudible]....

DR. NGUYEN D. TUAN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: It never happens as fast as anybody would like.

DR. NGUYEN D. TUAN: No. I'm not trying to push the point, and I would not have said what I said today five years or six years ago. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you for your testimony.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Kenji Murase? from the San Francisco State University, Professor of Social Work.

MR. MURASE: Thank you. Today, I am representing an organization called the Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund. This Fund was established by a group of Japanese Americans who had been removed from the West Coast and interned in concentration camps during World War II. At that time, we were helped to leave the camps and continue our education by various church groups and service organizations. The Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund was conceived as a vehicle to repay the help we received in the past. This repayment now takes the form of our providing financial assistance to deserving young people to further their education.

This year, the Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund is granting eight scholarships of \$500 each to Southeast Asian refugee students in high schools and community colleges in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area. In competition for these eight scholarships, we received close to 150 completed applications from Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese students who are graduating this June. The criteria for selection were personal and academic qualifications, education objectives and financial need.

My purpose in testifying today is to convey to you the impressions of our selection committee after reviewing the 150 Vietnamese applications. If this group of 150 Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese applicants is representative of Southeast Asian refugee students in our schools, then the refugee community should feel rightly proud and honored, and we, in turn, should feel truly blessed and richly compensated for having admitted them to our country.

As a group, the refugee students have achieved a superb record of academic excellence and wide participation in extra curricular activities. In the essays that they have written as part of their application, a recurrent theme is their strong motivation and determination to succeed in education because they owe it to their families, because they feel obligated to their communities and because education will be the means to a better life.

Another recurrent theme is the enormous sacrifice that refugee families are making to assure their children an education. Most of the 150 applicants' families are receiving some form of welfare assistance. Many of these students will be cut from welfare

assistance after they graduate in June. The most profoundly in need of support are those students who are alone in this country, whose parents remained behind in Vietnam in order that their children could get an education in the United States.

Without some form of financial assistance, many of these refugee students will be unable to continue their education beyond high school. The consequence would be a tragic loss and waste of human potential that could surely be used to enhance the quality of life for all of us. Most importantly, these students represent the future leadership of the refugee community, and we must, therefore, support the development of such leadership.

I have no concrete proposal to make, but there must be ways found to enable these students to continue their education and to realize their enormous potential. In order that you may have a picture of these students I am talking about, I will leave with you a profile of the 15 applicants who comprise the final pool from which we will make a selection of the eight finalists to receive the \$500 scholarship each. It happens that this final selection is being made this very evening at a meeting.

Thank you for this opportunity to convey this message to you on behalf of the refugee students.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you for being with us today.

MR. MURASE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: And we now have Assemblyman Bill Jones from Fresno. Welcome, Bill.

ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Our next speaker is Miss Shirley Kalinowski from

the Contra Costa County Social Services Department. Miss Kalinowski.

MS. KALINOWSKI: Good afternoon, members of the Joint Committee. My name is Shirley Kalinowski, and I am the Refugee Program Specialist for Contra Costa County. As the Refugee Program Specialist, I am responsible for the administration of the refugee program in Contra Costa County. I have come here today to describe the refugee impact in Contra Costa County and to express concern regarding the federal government's approach to the funding of the refugee program.

According to the voluntary agencies that provide refugee services in our County, there are currently more than 6,000 refugees that reside in our County. Our Department concurs with this estimate as we have identified over 2,900 refugees that are receiving some type of assistance. The Health Services Department has identified over 3,200 refugees receiving medical treatment and services, and both of our departments recognize that there are a great many refugees that are not known to either department.

Contra Costa County has been heavily impacted by the in-migration of secondary migrant refugees over the last three-and-a-half years as is evidenced by our increasing caseload statistics. In November, 1979, we had 497 time-eligible refugees on cash assistance. By June 30th of 1981, the number of time-eligible refugees on cash assistance had increased to 1,727 which is an increase of 247½%. As of September 30th, 1982, there were 2,247 time-eligible refugees on cash assistance which resulted in an additional 30.1% increase. Of our County's total refugee cash-aided population,

both the time-eligible and the time-expired, at least 50% of these refugees are secondary migrants.

The needs of the refugees in Contra Costa County have been shifting over the past few years. The first groups of refugees that were resettled in the County were mainly persons from the metropolitan areas of Vietnam. The later groups were refugees from the hill country of Laos.

The Laotian people have come from rural areas where they made their living by practicing primitive forms of agriculture or fishing. With little or no formal education, they are often illiterate in their own language. They seem to be making a determined but painfully slow transition from their fifteenth-century lifestyle to this country's culture. There are approximately 1,700 Laotians that have resettled in the western end of Contra Costa County. Of those 1,700, approximately 1,400 are receiving some type of assistance through out Department.

The Refugee Act of 1980 clearly places the responsibility for refugee resettlement at the federal level. However, the federal government appears to be treating refugee resettlement as a shared responsibility by federal, state and local governments and is actually shifting the cost to the state and the local governments.

One year ago, the federal government decreased federal funding by reducing time-eligibility for refugee cash assistance clients from 36 months to 18 months. The second 18 months for these refugees is funded at the County's General Assistance payment level which is often a lower payment rate than the RCA payment

levels. In Contra Costa County, we had 450 refugee clients that were receiving RCA. Out of these 450, 250 refugees remained on RCA when this 18-month reduction was implemented. 200 of these refugees were determined to be eligible to federally-reimbursed General Assistance. This shows that there was no decrease in the number of aided persons.

As the State estimates that the refugee welfare dependency rate is currently in excess of 70%, our County fully expects that as these clients' 36-month time-expire from federally reimbursed General Assistance, they will be aided from our County's funded General Assistance Program. When this occurs, county funding of General Assistance will exceed \$1 million per year for the refugee population.

Last federal fiscal year, California was threatened with a shortfall for refugee cash assistance, and the possibility that the program would be terminated. This situation was averted at the last minute. Now, once again, counties are being advised that there's a potential shortfall for this federal fiscal year and the Refugee Cash Assistance Program may not have enough money to operate through August and September.

In addition to projected shortfalls, the current Federal Administration has approved the position to block grant the refugee program, the cash, medical and social services to the State effective October 1st, 1983. As this grant will be based on the State's refugee populations, and as it is well known that there is much disagreement as to the number of refugees actually residing in the State, it is most probable that there will be insufficient

funding to the State to provide full cash, medical and social services for refugees. There is much speculation that if there is a funding shortage, the social services component will be the program to be first reduced or to become nonexistent.

With this reduction or elimination of social services, the primary goal of the resettlement program to enable refugees to obtain self-sufficiency would be thwarted. The Contra Costa County Social Service Department urges that the California Legislature oppose the block granting of the refugee resettlement program.

With this uncertain funding, it appears that the federal government is administering the current refugee resettlement program as if it were a temporary program with continuing uncertainty about future program content and funding.

The welfare dependency rate of the refugee population is of utmost concern. It is this Department's contention that as the resettlement program is necessitated by federal policies, it is the federal government's responsibility to provide adequate funding for cash and medical assistance to refugees without an arbitrary 36-month time limit. Full federal funding should be available until the refugee obtains self-sufficiency.

I'd like to thank you for this opportunity to appear before the Joint Committee and to express Contra Costa County's concerns regarding refugee resettlement and funding issues.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: One of this committee's charges is to try and remind the federal government of their responsibilities.

MS. KALINOWSKI: Wonderful!

?

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: And he has also taken a position on that block grant issue.

MS. KALINOWSKI: Against?

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Opposing.

MS. KALINOWSKI: Fantastic! Great! I'm glad to hear that. Any other questions? Okay, if not, the Contra Costa County Health Service Department has provided written testimony which they would like me to hand in.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Please.

MS. KALINOWSKI: Thank you very much.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Khamtorm Soyvira from the Lao Community.

(?)

MR. SOYVIRA: Thank you [inaudible]....Vu-Duc. Committee members, my name's Khamtorm Soyvira. I'm here today to address your committee on some of the concerns of the Laotian community. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to provide input for you today as members of Lao community in California. I feel that it is crucial for you and your committee to begin to understand the issues faced by the Laos so that you can address our concerns to the State Legislature.

The Lao community represent approximately 15% of the Southeast Asian population in the United States. In California, this percentage increases since it is one of the desired states of resettlement for the Laos. The Lao people are residing in both rural and urban areas. The majority of the Lao people have come from rural area of Laos and view themselves as separated from their extended families.

At this time, I would like to discuss in greater detail three

groupings of Lao who are residing in California. I will like to use the term "young single people," "young families," "middle-aged families."

The "young singles" are a group unique in the United States. As a group, they are a group which does not exist in Laos. It is a phenomenon which has developed out of survival. This group of people are between 18 to 30 years old who are chosen by their family to escape and establish themselves as an anchor relative overseas. A profile of age, the group usually comes to the United States alone but may be accompanied by one or two siblings.

In the United States, they are faced with having to live without the support of their extended family system. This face, in itself, is significant in that as in all Asian cultures, the loss or absence of the extended family system represents a void in ones framework in relating to the world.

As single people, they have taken risks in order to find employment and integrate themselves into society. They have demonstrated this ability by becoming members of the California Conservation Corp. In doing so, they have shown that they can function as productive members of our society, both in the working and social environment.

The "young families" people have a different picture of Laos. As a young family, they are usually between the age of 20 to 35 years old, and they may have children in the household and can be viewed as basically a nuclear family with strong traditional ties to the extended family system.

This group face the problems of all young families in the

United States. A central issue to the survival of this family is that of financial stability. For those families who are forced to go on refugee cash assistance or AFDC-Refugee Cash Assistance, they are program disincentives to employment. Among the disincentives are:

- The lack of availability of medical coverage for most entry-level jobs.
- Ineligibility to receive Title XX training for refugees who work over 100 hours per month.
- Ineligibility to attend Title XX English-as-a-second-language classes for full-time employed persons.

In the net result of the Department of Social Services regulations have been to send a hidden message to the refugees to maximize their length of stay on refugee assistance in order to receive other types of assistance.

The final group of Laos I would like to talk about today are the "middle-aged families." This group has been under an acute crisis situation in their struggle to survive. Without effective intervention, they will develop chronic problems and be forced to depend on society for even the most basic needs.

The middle-aged families are those where the parents are between 40 to 50 years old. They have children who are school age. They experience the same basic economic and social problems as the young family. But, in addition, they are also burdened psychologically by their age. This issue of age can be compared to the life crisis which is being experienced by those workers in the United States of similar age and have been displaced in their

jobs with no marketable skills. The differences for refugee families is that they feel that they cannot learn their new skills nor English and have resigned themselves to a substance survival mentality. Without the interest and support, they will not have the chance to integrate themselves into the society.

Given the picture to the three groupings of refugees from Laos, I need to address two areas of concern---they are mental health and family violence. I feel that these two topics are related to the total crisis which the refugees are experiencing.

The mental health needs of refugees are great. As you can imagine, this group of people have been under stress for many years. In the case of Laos, many resided in refugee camps between three to five years before coming to the United States. Their ability to cope with their new life is taxed to a maximum 'just' to survive. What we are beginning to see is that some refugees are crossing the invisible barrier between acceptable coping behavior and nonacceptable coping behavior. This is becoming more and more self-evident as you investigate the rising numbers of mental health contact and police reports involving Laotians. It is tragic to see increasing numbers of domestic violence episodes as the emotional frustrations of not being able to cope in this new society is being manifested in violence.

Committee members, the Lao community is just one of many refugee communities being here today. I have come to provide input from the Lao community so that you may better understand us in making your recommendations for state legislation. I strongly urge you to develop legislative recommendations which

address both the economy and social/human needs for the Lao community. Thank you.

(?)
?????????: Members, any questions?

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER???: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Mr. S _____

?????????: [Inaudible]....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: [Inaudible]....could you amplify on how you think welfare is a disincentive to those who want to work?

MR. SOYVIRA: Want to work?

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: How is welfare a disincentive for those who want to work?

MR. SOYVIRA: Well, you know, what my impression is that [inaudible]...., or welfare, have to provide these people for a short period, you see. If they can't get a job in terms of training or right now, and if the State can provide the funding to provide the Lao community and they can help themselves, they can provide a service, services, to the community and then they can create more jobs in terms of understanding the languages. I guess, you know, I might be unable to answer this.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Mr. Soyvira, are you telling us that if the---the longer you get welfare you do not want to go to work?

MR. SOYVIRA: No, no! That's not true at all! From my understanding is that if the people get out of the welfare because the language, because the skill ability---if that's great for the community, you see. Now, for the people who live in the welfare assistance it gives shame to leave them in that situation because

in Laos we don't have that kind of type of assistance---welfare assistance, Medi-Cal assistance, that kind of thing. Now, it's different from Lao to here, you see. The people from Laos, they come to the United States and they persist in their crisis life. That's why they need to have in the welfare system for a short term. Why the short term?---because they're waiting for their skills, waiting for their language ability. That's why I urge the State to provide the funding to the Lao community and then they can free themselves, they can, you know, better understand themselves, help themselves to looking for jobs.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: [Inaudible]....

MR. SOYVIRA: Well, if the.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Do you have that written down? Are you ready so that if we were to do, say, that for you, are you ready to do it?

MR. SOYVIRA: We're ready, ability to do it.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: I know the spirit is ready and the---but, are the programs ready? Is it written down? I mean, is the proposal ready for what you want to do if we give you the money to help give you the structure and all of the other things that you've been getting so far?

MR. SOYVIRA: Uh huh, that's what we would like to ask.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: So far, I've heard from all the witnesses what we need, what we want, but I don't see any effective mechanism. I don't see the proposals ready to go. Are they?

MR. SOYVIRA: Yes. Statistics have.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Okay. That doesn't really help telling

me how many---you had a lot of people said [inaudible].... Okay?

MR. SOYVIRA: Okay. We're trying to.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: [Inaudible]....your proposal of the Lao communities to take care of themselves.

MR. SOYVIRA: I would like to, you know, get---keep a short period, you know, brief. On the---regarding to yours, you said, we have to send our proposals. I'm asking for funding to provide the community, right? Now, we have been send that proposal in December last year. This is from Lao Family Association and the other from Lao [inaudible]....Association. Since that time, we have not received any assistance from the State, except, you know, regarding your question.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: I'd like to see what you wrote. Send it to me.

MR. SOYVIRA: [Inaudible]....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Thank you.

MR. SOYVIRA: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: Mr. Chairman, I have a question also.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Bill?

ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: Could I ask another question? Following up Mr. Agnos' [inaudible]....comments I get from the refugees in the Central Valley are the method in which the assistance is set up from the state and the federal. It is, in fact, a disincentive for them to begin to move into the work force, because if they start training, if they start working, it works back against them and then they're better off receiving assistance. Is that the case?

MR. SOYVIRA: You mean the---sorry, I can't catch you first time.

ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: Well, this is a question that you mentioned, I think, in your presentation that welfare or assistance payments are disincentives to participate or to---from work and try and move forward because of the way the structure is now. And no one's arguing the need for short-term relief while you get on your feet. But the question is, the structure of the payments are such that you're penalized from working, basically. This is what I get from some of my people in the Central Valley. Is that the case or am I making myself clear? Maybe I'm not.

MR. SOYVIRA: Well, I guess, you know, I may not answer your question.

ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: Okay, maybe I'll follow it up to one of the other people that comes forward. Thank you.

MR. SOYVIRA: Yeah. Okay.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. SOYVIRA: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Chaosarn Srisongfa? Project Director of the Lao Family Community in Richmond.

MR. _____: Okay, my name is _____.
? I came here to substitute Chaosarn. She's Director of Lao Family. The reason he couldn't make it today because he has some political difficulty---that's why he can't come and to be---to speak, you know, today. So, I have.....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: If--political difficulty, he should have come to talk to Assemblyman Agnos. (Laughter) He takes care of political difficulties.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: What is he, a Democrat or a Republican?
(Laughter)

MR. _____: No. Okay, you know, he has some kind of a, you know, political difficulty between, you know, this board and himself.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Oh. We understand that, too.

MR. _____: So, I'm here to, you know, to speak in behalf of Lao Family Community Incorporation. Our organization is organized on April, 1980. We base on our need of the Laos and refugee community in order to assist the goal of becoming a self-sufficiency. Lao Family is consisted of many, any group such as Laos---I mean [inaudible]....Lao Mien, Lao _____, Lao _____, Lao _____, Lao _____ and Lao _____.

Ninety percent of our people are highlanders who [inaudible].... and city life experience. Eighty percent of them are illiterate in our own language. This [inaudible]....to us that we have more [inaudible]....than other refugee group in the way to adjust our lives to the American society. We are [inaudible]....to other refugee group, in the sense of the educational and city life [inaudible]....experience. As our [inaudible]....indicate, this is mean we need more support and more services than other group. Eighty percent of our people are still on public assistance. The needs with our people [inaudible]....seeking for are: ESL, social adjustment, employment, vocational training. We clearly know that we have to achieve these kind of needs, especially ESL.

The Lao Family is a [inaudible]....organization. We have provide many services to help our people based on our volunteer such as social adjustment, translation, interpretation, job counseling, job placement on the seasonal job and family violation,

legal [inaudible].... We clearly recognize that the problem and service needs and the positive solution we have wholeheartedly tried to help our people to overcome this difficulty in every way. We have request the Department of Social Service to provide---to support us, to provide better services to refugee people, but we are turned down. We feel really disappointed. We are [inaudible].... that we didn't have the experiences of providing services to refugee. We will try to proclaim today that we have served refugee better than some service providers who have received funding from the State, from the government.

And, I personally want to make some comments. When I heard some other speaker has said about sufficiency, you know, to want the refugee to become a self-sufficiency, there are many, many agencies who try to hold on refugee and, you know, for something, not for the [inaudible]....of helping refugee to become a self-sufficiency.

And the other thing I want to make a comment on the job [inaudible]....that Mr. _____ mentioned based on our people. Our people, most of them are the farmer who have some experience on farming. We have heard that [inaudible]....or the Catholic Charity [inaudible]....who have tested some farming program in Livermore that we heard that we really [inaudible]....that our people they have difficulty to study or to get some English as a second language because of their lacks of the learning ability and learning background. They don't know how to read, to write in the Laotian language.

And the---another thing when I heard the---some other speaker

said that about a competition on asking these funds from the State to provide services for the refugee---that isn't true. Why I said a political difficulty for us, you know, to help or to become a self-sufficiency is based on---exactly what some speakers had that the---we do have some competition. So, that's it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Do you feel that there are some agencies that try and keep your family dependent?

MR. _____: Yeah, right.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: How?

MR. _____: Based on our, you know, [inaudible]....
(?)
look at them and we read them. And, I'm sorry that today, Chaosarn he work for agency and he's also the Project---or the Director of our organization, but he can't be here today. But I think it's, you know, there is no point, no reason that he can [inaudible]....speak for the refugee but in some [inaudible]....or something that he can't be here. I have to come to substitute him even though it's not my responsibility or it's not my duty. But I feel very strongly that I can speak for refugee or for my people, you know, for---and let you know and let this committee know that, you know, something going on and---but I have concur on the speaker who already spoke that mention this kind of problem that we have to become a self-sufficiency.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: All right. Thank you.

MR. _____: All right, thank you.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Ngo Van Thuc from the Vietnamese Elderly Mutual Assistance Association in San Francisco.

MR. NGO VAN THUC: Mr. Chairman, _____, and all the member of the committee. My name is Ngo Van Thuc. I am Secretary of the Vietnamese Elderly Mutual Assistance Association in San Francisco. The Association has 300 members. It was founded in 1980 under the auspices of the Center for Southeast Asian Refugee Resettlement.

I am here today to express my feelings to you as in understand that you have come to San Francisco to learn about my people.

I am one of many Vietnamese people who could not live with the Communists. I left my homeland in search of freedom. I will spend the rest of my life in this great country.

I left everything I had behind in Vietnam---relatives, my home, my friends. And now living lonely, while getting older, in a very new country, we have to cope with many difficult things that are hard to cope with by this age. Language, customs and even climate. Life in the United States has not been easy. Don't misunderstand me. I am grateful to be here. But many of my people, the elderly refugees, are not served by many of your programs. Many are too old to work, most are very lonely and all of us feel forgotten.

I am lucky to be here. I have a job. I will work long and hard to help repay this government for all that it has given my people. But many of us need your help. We want to have a place to get together, to help each other, to comfort each other whenever we feel down, to solve our own problems, and to have them solved also.

For all of us, I want to thank you and sincerely hope that you will not forget us. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Art.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Mr. Thuc, what did you do when you lived in Vietnam?

MR. NGO VAN THUC: I am service---civil service.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Civil service?

MR. NGO VAN THUC: That's it.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: In Saigon or where?

MR. NGO VAN THUC: In Saigon [inaudible]....province.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Why did you leave?

MR. NGO VAN THUC: Presently?

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: What made you leave?

MR. NGO VAN THUC: [Inaudible]....in Saigon.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Pardon?

MR. NGO VAN THUC: In Saigon.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: What made you leave Saigon? Or Vietnam?
(?)

MR. NGO VAN THUC: I live in Saigon [inaudible]....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Well, why did you decide to leave Vietnam?

MR. NGO VAN THUC: I left Vietnam because I don't....I don't....
I don't have....I don't happen to believe this Communist.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Did you bring your family with you?

MR. NGO VAN THUC: Ya, I left with my family.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. NGO VAN THUC: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Robert Rubin from the Bay Area Refugee and

Immigrant Rights Project?

MR. RUBIN: Good afternoon, Chairman Carpenter, Vice Chairman Agnos, members of the committee. I have no formal, prepared remarks as I only discovered when I walked in this morning that I was on the list of speakers. However, I won't shy from the opportunity and would like to just make a few brief remarks.

MR. VUONG: Could you speak up, please?

MR. RUBIN: I'm Robert Rubin. I'm the Senior Staff Attorney with the San Francisco Lawyer's Committee for Urban Affairs, where I direct a special project addressing immigrant and refugee rights issues. We involve ourselves in issues impacting on the low-income, immigrant and refugee community in matters involving access to higher education, employment opportunities, housing, access to a full range of public benefits.

We have challenged state laws which restricted the ability of refugees to attend state colleges which impeded their---of course, their ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency. We have successfully challenged federal restrictions where the government attempted to reduce benefits from the 36- to the 18-month period without providing refugees with adequate notice. This imposed hardships, of course, not only on refugees but our local social services systems, because they, of course, were not provided with the adequate notice either. And, hopefully, these will be issues that this committee will be able to address in serving for greater lines of---and open lines of communication with the responsible federal officials.

A matter that has recently surfaced that I would like to

address briefly involves the new Medi-Cal contracting program where contracts were awarded on a selective contracting basis to certain hospitals around the State. In the San Francisco area, a matter arose where the hospitals---St. Mary's Hospital, which had previously provided services to close to 60% of the Southeast Asian refugee community, was denied a contract and, thus, this significant segment of the refugee population was denied access to any kind of health care. We intervened in this law suit on behalf of the Southeast Asian refugee community and recently achieved a successful settlement of those issues wherein the State is required to hire trained medical interpreters, ensure that there is full translation facilities, documents will be translated, even the professional staff nurses and doctors will be required to attend training sessions so that they, too, are sensitive to the cross-cultural issues that confront Southeast Asian refugee patients who are dealing with Western medical systems for the first time.

The reason I address that issue in a little more detail is because I think it is an issue that demonstrates, perhaps, somewhat of a lack of concern or perhaps just knowledge about the needs of the refugee community and perhaps with the leadership that this committee can bring, when the next time the State goes around and does contract with hospitals, those needs of refugees will be addressed, and it won't require time-consuming and costly litigation to achieve these results which, of course, are so critical to the refugee community.

And then just finally, as committee members you're certainly

aware that the federal government has certainly continued to shirk its responsibility of providing for the resettlement needs of refugees, and more and more of a burden is being placed on the State, and I hope that this committee can forcefully advocate the interests of California and its refugee population and ensure that the federal government does assume its responsibility in these critical matters.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Bill.

ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: You might be able to answer my question more directly. I asked earlier concerning the delivery systems and the assistance dollars to---I had some refugees [inaudible].... mention the fact that sometimes assistance dollars and the way they're presented are disincentives to move forward in the education field or the work field. Have you found this to be the case? Do you get up to a certain point and you, you know, you might as well not, but you don't get your rest if you're not a full-time [inaudible]....

MR. RUBIN: I don't think that we can give a blanket yes or no to that. I think there's no question that certain welfare programs do provide disincentives to.....

ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: The whole idea is to get them through the system and get them incorporated into the environment as soon as possible.

MR. RUBIN: That's right. And not promote the dependency which you refer to. That, of course, was the federal government's intent in reducing refugee benefits from the 36 months to the 18 months. I think that the approach that they took minimized the

problems that certain segments of the refugee population have in achieving economic self-sufficiency as you've heard through.....

(?)
ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: You've found this to be the case that these folks have mentioned earlier? In certain cases?

MR. RUBIN: Yeah. Certainly. There are a number of refugees who come here who, for instance, are perhaps illiterate in their own language. It's going to take a lot more time to train these persons to achieve economic self-sufficiency than perhaps it is someone who was brought up in an urban environment.

ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: That's what I'm driving at, though, is there is insufficient needs in the delivery system, now, that create a situation where we ascend [inaudible]....a minute.

MR. RUBIN: Unquestionably.

(?)
ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: We ask them what to do on our delivery systems, how the disincentives work.

MR. RUBIN: I believe that's true. I think in, perhaps even some instances that the 18 months might even be too long for certain persons, and if there was more of an incentive to.....

ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: I don't have any problem with time, it's just the system I'm questioning.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Who do you know that can do it in less than 18 months, Robert?

MR. RUBIN: Which---what refugees could.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Yes. Who have you found who can do it in less than 18 months? Can you name a lot?

MR. RUBIN: Well.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: [Inaudible]....and I don't think you're

going to find a large number of refugees who can get economically self-sufficient in less than 18 months.

MR. RUBIN: Well, there are some. I.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: How many did it last year?

MR. RUBIN: No, I mean, that's true, and that's why I say you can't really give a blanket yes or no, but the point is that whether we're talking---the time is really just sort of an arbitrary figure.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: What Mr. Jones is asking you is, is the system---and maybe you haven't worked with enough welfare recipients to know---but is the system designed to help somebody get off of welfare in such a way that they don't have any disincentives because they're going to lose too much by going off of welfare when they start working? That applies across-the-board whether you're a refugee on welfare or an American citizen on welfare, right? And [inaudible]....in the past because the---on entry-level for job [inaudible]....we didn't happen to have any medical benefits that welfare did, so somebody makes \$600 on welfare and is offered \$620 working for McDonalds doesn't do, but I don't have the dental benefits, I don't have the medical benefits for my four kids and, therefore, they lose all of that and the net is they lose a lot of money, right?

MR. RUBIN: I think that's absolutely true. I don't think it's a particular problem for refugees.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: That's true. That's my point. And we need to develop programs using perhaps the refugees since they're the latest arrivals. We need to develop programs that can

demonstrate that if we trust long enough, we can apply to keeping Medi-Cal, for example, or other benefits for that new working person even though that's not in the---within the existing rules. We'll eventually get them off and never have them return.

MR. RUBIN: I'm in full agreement with that and, hopefully, there can be some solutions to those problems that.....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Art, you asked for a specific instance.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Pardon?

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: You asked for a specific instance---if Vice Premier Ke came to this country, immediately bought a liquor store and was immediately self-sufficient, and I suspect that all the former vice premiers could (cross talking) very quickly.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS:Hispanic can, right?

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Right.

MR. RUBIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That wasn't the example that I would.....(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. RUBIN: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Le An Khuong, social worker from the Contra Costa County Social Service Department.

MR. LE AN KHUONG: Good afternoon. My name is Khuong Le, and I work over in Contra Costa. Today I come for the testimony. I'm Vietnamese refugee and representative for the Vietnamese refugee in Contra Costa County.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Excuse me, I wonder if you'd mind pulling that microphone towards you. Right.

MR. LE AN KHUONG: I'm Vietnamese refugee and representative

for the Vietnamese refugee in Contra Costa County. I feel that there are four points outlined here that are glaring needs of Vietnamese refugee community in Contra Costa County.

The refugee relative or non-relative sponsor of private agency. The agency must provide the cash assistance immediately and not late than one week from the day of refugee arrival in the United States. There have been many complaints by the refugee that there is considerable delay in [inaudible]...and helping in addition. They are then left without funding and start their lives in [inaudible]...and food and rent. Once the refugee is placed on welfare and the amount borrowed from the sponsor and then deduct from his grant as "income." Therefore, the refugee is again left with minimum financial resource. Agency take them to the camp and dump them to the local and no follow up at all.

Second one, when the refugee need help in translating, they do not have sufficient staff to provide for them. They need more bilingual/bicultural worker in different department to provide the service for refugee.

The third one, refugee need more time to learn English and also adjust to new situations. The refugee have to learn and work, but they cannot speak any English due to language handicap. No employment skills. They need more on job training in order to join the labor market to become self-sufficient. The Vietnamese are not lazy. They want to work but they do not want on to be dependent on welfare.

The refugee have so many problem such as housing, transportation, child care and job development. In Contra Costa County,

they need the strong community in order to develop for necessary resource in order to provide for the individual needs of the community.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you for your testimony.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Paul Delay, Director.....

UNIDENTIFIED: Mr. Chairman, Dr. Delay, the Medical Director of the Refugee's [inaudible]....here and got caught up with a patient and is going to try and get here as soon as possible [inaudible].....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Maybe you would call our attention to his return so we can go back.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Huot Tran?

MR. HOUT TRAN: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman.....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Good afternoon.

MR. HOUT TRAN:and the committee. As a successful refugee in the United States, first of all, I think, we need a job for certain men here and other services we need. When I came to United States five years ago while I was in school learning ESL from the beginning none of English that I known before I came here to this State. And I was making a living by working in the restaurant and who was helping me to get a job that time it was a refugee services employment program. After ESL classes, I went to a training program which lead me to a job in data processing. Again, who helping me that time, refugee employment program. (?)

If I do not receive those services, what happen to me by then? On welfare, RCA. Example: I've seen my countryman who came to this State for his degree. He working with the agency (?)

employment program for the next three months also and he got a job in construction corporation in San Francisco. Another country-man he speak no English. He was [inaudible]....on the job in private school as a janitor while he go to school in the morning (?) learning English. These fact is the need of the refugee who receive the services from the agency which is employment program.

Right now, I see a lot of services being cut due to the short of fund, so I beg you, Mr. Chairman, the committee, to [inaudible].... support to get these service [inaudible]....so our refugee can be survive. And, I love this country. I become U.S. citizen. I love to stay here, but I love to see other refugee get the chance, success in this country the same as mine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, the committee.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Did you continue working while you went to---what'd you go to a community college or [inaudible].... your training [inaudible]....

MR. HUOT TRAN: Adult school.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Adult school.

MR. HUOT TRAN: [Inaudible]....ESL and then go to.....

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: And then to your data processing training, where'd you get that?

MR. HUOT TRAN: In city college.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Uh huh.

MR. HUOT TRAN: And in private school which I loan. (?)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: And you were able to continue your job while you had that?

MR. HUOT TRAN: Yes, ma'am.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Uh huh. It's a very, very [inaudible].... to see somebody like you [inaudible]....come into this country and represent your other fellow refugees.

MR. HUOT TRAN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Curtis Cavin? for the Refugee Employment Assistance Program.

MR. CAVIN: Good afternoon. Refugee resettlement is an extremely complicated process. It involves an intimate understanding of two cultures---the culture of the refugee and the.....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Would you pull that, sir, a little closer? That's fine.

MR. CAVIN: Refugee resettlement involves two cultures---the culture of the refugee and the culture into which he is being integrated.

There's a dire need for refugees to be involved at all levels of the resettlement process. They should be representative of all refugee groups---Southeast Asians, East Europeans, Ethiopians, Afghans and whatever groups are yet to come. There's also a need for Americans who are perceptive to these problems and familiar with both cultures, the refugees and his own. I think it is a credit to the local resettlement community that great strides are being made toward meeting both of these problems.

I'm not a refugee myself, but I've been involved with refugees for six years. I lived in Southeast Asia for five years and am bilingual. I deeply care about the refugees of all nationalities and the problems that they face here. I feel that the members of

the resettlement community share my concern, and given the resources available, I believe these people deserve a great deal of credit to the job they're doing.

Resettlement is a complicated process. To the outsider, it may seem simple. You help the refugee find an apartment, give him some donated clothing, find him a job, and the rest takes care of itself. We, in the resettlement community, know the process is not that simple. It's a multi-faceted process. Unfortunately, some of the policies that now dictate our resettlement seem to oversimplify the process. One example of this is a simple equation, and that is that employment equals self-sufficiency. In some cases this formula works. But in many, and I believe a growing number of cases, it does not work. The sum of this equation is this: Find the refugee a job, any job, and our work is done. And this is a dangerous attitude.

Beginning April 1st, funds for employment services in this community were cut by more than half. Until then, my agency, REAP, was able to serve virtually every refugee who came in our door. On April 1st, we placed over 200 refugees on a waiting list. Given our present resources, many of these refugees will never get off that list. We also assign counselors record case-loads. As many as 70 for full-time counselors and as many as 60 for part-time counselors. In addition, the job development function that serves these refugees was drastically reduced.

The reason for these cuts was not that the old system wasn't working. On the contrary. REAP found over 1,100 jobs in the previous 18 months. In February, the highest unemployment rate

since World War II, we placed over 92 refugees in Bay Area jobs. Still, overall resettlement funds for the county, one of the most heavily impacted counties in the country, was drastically reduced. To aggravate this situation, the decision was made to fund a Central Intake Unit, not from administrative funds, as it is an administrative function, but from the funds that were intended to provide tangible services to the refugees.

To illustrate some of these cuts, I would like to take you through part of the process. For this, I've invented an imaginary refugee. I'll call him Vaughn. He might be Vietnamese or Lao or Ethiopian or East European. Vaughn comes to this country with little or no English. If he has job skills, they're usually non-marketable in this country or they require special licenses or high English levels that Vaughn does not have. He's enrolled in ESL classes, but he's not learning English as fast as his welfare is running out. As a requirement for welfare, his caseworker refers him to an employment program. A bureaucratic maze leads on to various agencies, half a dozen forms, trips back to the county welfare department, and finally, to a bilingual resettlement counselor---placement counselor. Okay, let's---for this, we will assume that Vaughn was fortunate enough not to be placed on a waiting list. After a few more forms, Vaughn gives---Vaughn an orientation to the American job market. But because the agency is understaffed and the counselor is saddled with a huge caseload, the orientation is brief and sketchy. Vaughn goes home, he tries to digest the information which is strange and foreign to him and runs counter to his cultural background.

A few weeks later, or a few months, depending on the job market, the unemployment rate, Vaughn gets a job---gets a call from his counselor who has a job opening. Vaughn might qualify for it if his English has improved enough. Typically, the job is on an assemblyline or is a parking lot attendant or is a dishwasher in a restaurant. In most cases, the job pays only minimum wage or a little more. Vaughn is naturally worried about this. The job doesn't offer medical benefits. He doesn't want to forfeit the security of Medi-Cal for a job that doesn't pay enough to cover any medical costs that might be incurred should he or members of his family get sick or injured.

Let's say the employer decides to offer Vaughn the job. Maybe his English isn't good enough, but his welfare does qualify him, the employer, for tax credits. Under threat of being sanctioned and being left with virtually no support for his family, Vaughn accepts the job. He doesn't dare quit because that, too, would subject him to sanctioning. After 90 days, Vaughn's case is closed, and he is entered into the statistics as a successful completion.

Now cut off from the resettlement system, Vaughn begins to think about his future. If he is lucky enough to be young and literate, he might be able to improve his English enough to get a better job. But he does not---but does he really know how to go about it? Job search techniques have been explained to him but not necessarily taught to him. The ever-changing job market will soon have no place for his skills and new, evermore technical skills will be in demand. It is not realistic to think that Vaughn will not go back on the welfare roles.

This is probably a worse case example. Perhaps it points up several things that are wrong with the current resettlement process. But I think the most important point here is where the scenario leaves off. What about Vaughn's future? What will happen to him and his family once resettlement programs no longer exist?

The emphasis now is on removing barriers to employment. What is needed is more emphasis on removing barriers to continued employment. In this way, Vaughn can not only find that first job, but that second and third job that he will inevitably need in a job market where the average worker has seven job changes in his lifetime. Removing barriers to continued employment would also involve giving Vaughn more English skills and more job skills so that he can enter the job market with some chance to better himself. Some chance to interface, to relate to non-refugees. This would go much further toward immigrating the refugee into the social stream than the dead end jobs that many of them are now forced to take.

I believe we should stop equating self-sufficiency with just employment. Self-sufficiency should be employment and the personal resources to continue to be employed even after resettlement programs have ended. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: Mr. Chairman? Do you perceive that the end result and [inaudible]....past that is the responsibility of the government?

MR. CAVIN: I believe that the resources are there now with--- even with the monies that are being spent or even a little more to provide the refugee with those---his own personal resources

to find those other jobs.

ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: [Inaudible]....you've given us, I think, a good summary of what problems are in the future and the funds that we should [inaudible]....to.

MR. VUONG: [Inaudible]....Thu Huong will not be able to come here, so our next speaker will be Mr. Dang Duc Canh who is the Director of the Center for Southeast Asian Refugee Resettlement, please, San Mateo County.

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman and all the committee members, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Dang Duc Canh. I am the Branch Director of the San Mateo County Branch office of the Center for Southeast Asian Refugee Resettlement. I come before you to raise attention to a national issue of great concern to Southeast Asian and other citizens of California.

On Monday, May 9th, a proposed piece of legislation introduced by Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming will go before the Senate Floor. The House version introduced by Congressman Romano Mazzoli of Kentucky is due to come before the House Judiciary Committee this week and is expected to move to the House Floor before the July 4th recess.

The proposed legislation, known as the Simpson-Mazzoli bill, will enact sweeping changes to the current immigration law. Contained in the bill are numerous provisions which will affect the Southeast Asian community. Of greatest concern is the change in

the Fifth Preference category for immigration. It is the right of United States citizens to petition brothers and sisters for immigration to the United States. Under the original version of the Simpson-Mazzoli bill, this preference category was eliminated. An amendment was introduced by Senator Edward Kennedy to retain the Fifth Preference, limiting it to unmarried brothers and sisters and 10% of the preference numbers. Under immigration policy, United States citizens must petition for the immigration visas for their brothers and sisters overseas. Although the Kennedy amendment allows for unmarried brothers and sisters, it gives no hope for reunion with married brothers and sisters overseas.

I find it extremely cruel to be separated from family members who had to take perilous risks to their lives in escaping to be stopped short of being reunited due to legislation. I am asking you as individual elected representatives and as legislative body to lobby for the California Congressional delegation and members of the Senate and House Judiciary Committee to defeat the proposed Simpson-Mazzoli bill or minimally, to amend the bill to include both married and unmarried brothers and sisters.

I have enclosed a list of the names of the members of the Senate and House Judiciary Committee for your reference in my written testimony.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today.
Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Mr. Canh, very often in these kinds of hearings, we assume that everyone knows the reason why the Vietnamese refugee is here. Just for the record, could you tell

us why you think the refugee is here? It's not a trick question. But just tell me why is the Vietnamese refugee here?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: I would like to tell you that I am a refugee twice. In 1954 after the Communists took over the North Vietnam, my family and myself got to move to the South because we could not live under the Communist regime.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: What as your---what would be the reason you were---what did your family do there?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: I beg your pardon?

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: What did your family do? For work?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: In Vietnam?

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: In North Vietnam in 1954.

MR. DANG DUC CANH: My father was a fully high-ranking government official in North Vietnam. And, most of fam---in my family work for the government, including myself.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Okay. And then you fled to South Vietnam.

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Yes, in 1975.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: 19--you fled from South Vietnam.

MR. DANG DUC CANH: First, I fled from North Vietnam in 1954.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Where did you go?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: To the South---Saigon.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Saigon. What did you do there?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: My father was a big government official, including my brothers and sisters and I was in Vietnamese navy.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: You were in the navy.

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: And so after the fall of Saigon and Vietnam, what did---then did you have to leave again?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: What would have happened if you had stayed there?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: I was former a soldier---they would put me what's so called in a re-education camp. But that's not a real re-education---that's a labor camp. And they would kill me. For example, right now, my goal---I am the only one in my whole family here. My parents, brothers and sisters still there, including my wife and children. And my brothers are still in labor prison camp after eight years.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Your brothers are still in the---in a re-education camp after eight years?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Yeah.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: What about your wife and children?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: My wife and children take to Saigon but my children cannot go into college. The higher they admit them is to be high school.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: I'm sorry? The high school goes to---are they in high school?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Yeah, in high school only.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Why is that?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Because they want to punish them, just because I am a Vietnamese navy officer.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: I see. How did you---.....

MR. DANG DUC CANH: At that time in 19---in April, 1975, I

was on ship and my ship was on the ocean at that time. That's why I couldn't get back to Saigon and bring my family with me.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: I see. What about the average refugee, are they also in jeopardy and is that why they left? The ordinary, regular refugee? You were a Vietnamese naval officer. Are most of the refugees military personnel, either officers or enlisted people, that come to this country?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Yes. To the first wave of refugees in 1975, most of us are soldiers.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Were soldiers, who---preferably, who were allies of the American troops there, marine, soldiers, air force.

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: And what would have---and they would have suffered the same kind of fate then, I suppose. What about the succeeding waves of people who have come here, including those who are still coming? Why are they coming?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Just because they are seeking freedom. We are here not by---to finding a better life, a better way to live. We are here just for freedom.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Because you couldn't think of it as not having---in this country [inaudible]....circumstances under which you were lost and they would be jeopardized and their lives were in jeopardy, I suppose, from what you're telling me in your own country. I think it's a story that is not your---often in this country that the Vietnamese refugee in contrast to many other refugees, although not all, are not here because they are seeking to find a better way of life in this country and seeking to improve

their standard of living, but simply that they cannot live in their own country because they [inaudible]....with us in the war that was lost.

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Sir, I don't think that's because the South Vietnamese was the American ally even we [inaudible]....and the Communists right after [inaudible]....before 1954, we weren't the American ally yet. But after they took over the country in North Vietnam, they put millions of people into the labor camps because to me, I think, that---and this is their [inaudible]....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: They what?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: They got invaded [inaudible]....and I am they want to put a---to work as slave.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Now, how do you explain the presence in our country of refugees, of the Laotians, the Cambodians? Why is there---why are the---the multitude, for example?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Just because they're seeking freedom too. Because Laotian Communists, Cambodian Communists or Communists everywhere in the world. They are doing the same---the same thing. And, I would like to tell you that based on our 4,000 years of history.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Pardon?

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Based on the Vietnamese 4,000 years of history, none of us left our country to seek for better living.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: You were satisfied with your own country, prior countries then.

(?)

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Yes. In case we can defeat the Communists in Vietnam right now, I'm willing to go back.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Thank you.

MR. DANG DUC CANH: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Mr. Chieu?

MR. PHAM MINH CHIEU: Mr. Vice Chair, committee members, my name is Chieu Pham. I am the Employment and Training Director at the Center for Southeast Asian Refugee in San Francisco. I'd like to thank all of you for giving me an opportunity to speak to you on the problems of the refugees that we are most concerned now at the Center; namely, those refugees who have a high probability of needing welfare assistance for a lifetime if immediate action is not taken.

I'm speaking about the refugees who from Indochina, from rural, in some cases, pre-industry areas. For example, the tribal people of Laos, the fishermen and the rice growers of the Mekong Delta and others who have little or no English or no education background in their native languages. And their work experience have no marketable value in this country and in particularly, in the cities of California.

It is these so-called (unquote) "refugees" are now facing with the greatest barrier to employment opportunity, not because of lack of motivation, industriousness or willing to work. Quite the contrary, these have very high values in their native cultures. Rather, their employment barrier lies in their little of ability speaking English next to limited opportunity in obtaining marketable skill and intense and finally, a heavy, a very highly competition in the labor market even those in the entry level because they don't speak enough English.

And, finally, these people are not very adept in speaking
(?)
fluent languages such as English. These refugees try and try to
get into the labor market by accepting the lower paid job. The
most entry or entry-level entries for example, dishwasher, [in-
audible]....car services, emptying trash can, etc., you can name
it. But from time to time again, we are passed over, and these
position, would also called survival jobs, are given to people
(?)
who can speak better English and understand instructions, read
the label, etc.

After a while, these refugee have given up their hope in
trying to begin a livelihood, realizing that it's not a choice but
it's lack of opportunities, not to mention all the recent welfare
regulation would have forced them to remain on welfare roll. And,
this is exactly, to me, why we have such a high welfare dependency
rate throughout the State of California.

. When we realize that---or when we consider that these refugee
who take a long time for them to be able to speak enough English,
to compete on the open market, I strongly hope that this committee
will take some caution and appropriate measures in deciding into
the \$19 million which will be coming into California under the
name of targeted assistant money to those county that have the
highest refugee welfare dependency. We should not look at the
problems on the surface and try to solve it. We should look at
the problems at the root and try to determine what caused the pro-
blem. The problems seem to me is that not because they don't
want to work, not because welfare is a disincentive to them for
their accepting employment offer, but because they have no choice

to get out, they have no other way rather than relying on welfare assistance. And, I'm willing to answer any questions you might have, but I'd like to make my two recommendations on this.

I would like to urge this committee to look into the possibility of spending those \$21 million that will be coming into California and I also suggest that community--refugee community organizations which already have fiscal experience be empowered to create jobs and appropriate training for refugees. If we can look at this kind of money as an investment on helping refugees and helping refugee own support group so they will be able to continue providing jobs and appropriate training to the members in a long---in a more---in a long time to come. By making this commitment, I strongly believe that the State will ultimately end up saving a great deal of money over a long year because of the costs associated with the costs of supporting refugee on welfare. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: What, first of all, how do you---do you have any feel or information [inaudible]....precisely numbers that would be a necessary, almost a---their present state of education for unemployable when you see what a---approximately what percentage would be total of numbers of refugees that are receiving help?

MR. PHAM MINH CHIEU: Well, I don't have the exact number, but I could answer you based on my own experience. I have been involved with refugees over seven years now, especially in the employment aspect, and I don't believe that there are many refugees

with some educational background or with some job skill background and who have been in this country for more than 18 months or two years are still relying on public assistant. The reason why in San Francisco, and particularly California, we have such a high welfare dependency rate is---are those refugee from Laos, _____, _____, the rice growers, the fishermen, with no marketable skill, and in addition to that, these are people with numbers of children. And as you know, due to the recent welfare regulation, they could not accept employment offer because if they do, it will mean they will go hungry instead of having enough bread to put on the table. I'm not saying it's right or wrong, but if we put ourself in a situation that we are now a [inaudible]....not a country and even such enough money to leave on [inaudible]....we go on and accept employment offer it mean that there will be less bread to put on the table for our children. I think we would think twice about that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Are there differences in the ages in terms of---in other words, do you see that some of the other ones given special help in education that they could be brought into the job market?

MR. PHAM MINH CHIEU: I strongly believe in the philosophy of letting established refugees of community-run refugee helping their own members. By doing that, we not only---for example, if we help refugees in community refugee-run organization, by helping them to set up or to starting their own businesses, if we in turn help them to become self-sufficient, first of all, they will not have to rely on state money. Secondly, they will have an oppor-

tunity to provide training to their own members. And by doing that, we will help the refugee to get off the welfare system and finally, relieve the burdens on the taxpayer shoulder.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: So, when you were talking about creating jobs, the power to create jobs, would you then---would one refugee provide those who are able to run a small business help them in [inaudible]....or conditions that help that they employ other refugees?

MR. PHAM MINH CHIEU: Yes, ma'am.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: [Inaudible]....what is some of your thoughts on.....(cross talking)

MR. PHAM MINH CHIEU: [Inaudible]....that I understand that the money to provide or to fund agency will no longer be there, and in order for us to be able to provide successful resettlement, we have to help community-based agency in generating their own fund. First of all, it will help them not to rely on public money, and at the same time having money to provide training opportunity to their community members.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KILLEA: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Thank you. Mr. Nhi? Oh, he's not here. Okay, Dr. Curry?

UNIDENTIFIED: [Inaudible]....Dr. Curry is not here, but I was told to bring to your attention that---when Dr. Delay arrived from the Refugee Screening Clinic and he has arrived.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Okay, good. Is he going to---is he on the schedule or has he been.....

?????????: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Oh. Why don't you come up now. We've already passed you.

DR. DELAY: I'm Dr. Delay. I'm the Director and the full-time physician.....

(?)
MS. FREDERICK: If you could speak a little louder.

(?)
DR. DELAY: I'm afraid I am obviously too soft spoken for this---uhm, for the Refugee Medical and Screening Clinic at San Francisco General Hospital that was formerly.....

MS. FREDERICK: I think they can't---still can't hear.....

DR. DELAY: Still can't hear me. All right.

MS. FREDERICK: Maybe if you bring the mike forward.

DR. DELAY: I'll speak up and then I can adjust it a little bit [inaudible]....lean down some. I'm the Director and full-time physician at the Refugee Medical Clinic at San Francisco General Hospital. Are they hearing me now?

MS. FREDERICK: Can people hear? No.

DR. DELAY: No, all right.

?????????: Real close to it---get real close to it.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Why don't you speak up a little bit and then you can hold it up. That's good.

DR. DELAY: I'm the Director and full-time physician at the Refugee Medical Clinic and Screening Clinic at San Francisco General Hospital that was formerly located at the _____ Public Health Service Hospital, and then we moved over to San Francisco General December of '81 when all the public health service hospitals were closed.

We serve several roles. We provide the initial medical

screening for all primary refugees to San Francisco. We also do screening for secondary migrants. We do ongoing care for a large number of the people that we initially screen, and we're the sole source of medical care for all the MIAs who are designated as refugees. We have a very small staff consisting of myself, a half-time physician, two nurses, three interpreters and one secretary. Most of our translator staff is provided to us free by the Refugee Health Agency that was represented earlier by Mr. Ron Rowell.

For the past year, we've noticed increased utilization of the clinic in spite of the fact that the number of primary migrants has been decreasing. The reasons behind this are the increasing entrance of secondary migrants to San Francisco and the problem of the 18-month cutoff of the Medi-Cal eligibility, and this involves a lot of refugees living in San Francisco.

Three of our employees out of our total staff of nine are on short-term funds. They're on SNAP funds that will terminate in October---actually September 30th of this year. The people who are on these three positions are running our prenatal clinic and also we're provided with nutritionist services from the Department of Social Services to Madeline Richards' program which is also on a SNAP funding. We're unable to see how we are going to continue to function if these three positions are no longer made available to us.

The reason I'm here today is to discuss what I feel are the deficiencies in access to medical care in San Francisco. We're the only clinic of this kind that exists here and we are short of

staff. Access is extremely important. If you don't have translation, you cannot provide adequate medical care and you're winding up doing veterinary medicine, and that's what goes on in a lot of emergency facilities. Sign language cannot allow you to get into the subtleties of history taking and physical examination.

I'm not asking for a special clinic that has special, fancy properties. Some refugee clinics throughout the country have computer access, they can generate disease prevalent stata. We don't have anything like that. We feel lucky when our electronic thermometer is working, when our xerox machine is working. We feel that it's far more important to spend money on the---our most recent acquisition was an audiometer---a screening audiometer to determine hearing levels for the school age children. Our funding besides the SNAP positions which will run out consists of Medi-Cal and CHDP, which is the Child Health and Disability Prevention program which we try to tap as much as possible. And any monies that have been set aside for refugee, we make an attempt for in order to keep ourselves functioning.

There are an unknown number of refugees in San Francisco now---40,000, approximately, is what we're told. They're not all able to speak fluent English to the point where a medical history can be taken. Many of them still have chronic diseases, diseases that are unique to this population. Our refugees include the Ethiopians, Afghanis and Poles in addition to Southeast Asians, and we feel that access to care with proper translation support and some ancillary services are critical to the provision of basic medical services to this population.

That's basically all I have to say.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: All right. Questions? Thank you, Dr. Delay. Dr. Tao I guess is the next..... After that, we'll have Sari Karet, correct?

MR. LE VAN TAO: Mr. Vice Chairman and committee members, my name is Tao Van Le. I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak to you today. I am Project Coordinator for the Refugee Business Ownership Project supported by a grant from the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement. I believe that my testimony today is of great importance to refugees who are here now as well as tomorrow's refugees. Without a clear understanding of the needs of refugees now, future generations will suffer because of our inability to plan for a future that goes beyond the immediate needs of a person, a group or an entire society.

What I have to say today relates to the problem of developing effective means to aid refugees in becoming self-sufficient. My colleagues and I understand the need to provide refugees with situations where self-sufficiency is not only viable but is also achievable within a reasonable period of time after their arrival in the United States.

The fact that after having to wait an extended period of time, refugees appear to lose their initial interest and motivation to become self-sufficient. That is very common to most of our experience. I can attest to personally arriving in the U.S. with a great deal of hope and desire to succeed as an American. However, after experiencing the first few months of American life, I began to wonder if the hope I had was only a dream due to the

difficulties I had in adapting to such a different society and a general indifference of people toward me when I discussed my own needs and aspirations. This was back in 1975. Those resettling in the U.S. today must experience an even greater disappointment because of the lack of jobs and the apparent lack of interest the society has in helping the refugees find a road to self-sufficiency. We all have a responsibility to not only help the refugee but also teach the refugee how to be self-sufficient within a society which may appear uncaring and more concerned about obtaining sufficient resources for its own people.

The fact that a large number of refugees from the late '70s are still on public assistance and that many refugees arriving today are almost immediately placed on public assistance is a major problem. To exacerbate this problem, the federal government in all of its wisdom has over the past two years systematically reduced funding for the refugees and refugee-related programs. No matter the reason, whether it is because of the lack of funds or the feeling that too much money has been invested in the refugee problem, the outcome is the same. More refugees are on welfare than ever before and as the problem has grown in highly impacted areas such as our own, there are fewer and fewer options to offer those refugees who are giving up and deciding to remain on welfare. We can blame the federal government for the dilemma, but after all, we are the ones who are going to have to deal with it. During your deliberations, I hope that you will look at the problem of refugees achieving self-sufficiency as one that must be guided and controlled at the local level. In recognizing this fact, it

seems to me that the State has the mandate, indeed the moral obligation, to make sure that communities are assisted in helping the refugees become self-sufficient.

As Project Coordinator of the Refugee Business Ownership Project, I deal daily with refugees who are trying to open, purchase, expand businesses. These businesses not only serve to provide income for the refugees who own or operate them, they also serve as employers of refugees. Admittedly, the majority are small businesses employing two to ten persons outside of the immediate family. However, some represent future large employers as well as models with which other refugees can identify. The cost of this program is reasonable if one considers that one successful business on the average will take seven to ten persons off the welfare rolls. Currently, we are helping better than 27 persons develop viable and effective means to start, expand or open businesses. We have already been successful in opening a number of small business, but to continue, we will need funds to help refugees develop business plans and to stimulate financial institutions to favorably evaluating loan requests from refugees.

As you know, the Asian community generally, and the Southeast Asian community specifically, have been most successful at forming and running businesses. In this regard, the Southeast Asian community has always worked very hard to be successful in all they have done. This means that the support system of the family and the community provides a foundation which guarantees the ongoing support of business as well as other productive activities---what we call family, unity foundations.

The Southeast Asian always has the support of his family and the community to help him through difficult periods. This is the reason businesses founded by Southeast Asians are usually successful. It is our belief that funding which is directed at enhancing the growth and development of Southeast Asian businesses is well invested because it is in all probability going to be directed at activities which will be successful.

If the federal government's current funding is insufficient, the State must consider supplemental funding for those communities which have competent refugee populations which have the expertise and time to aid in the identification and support of programs directed at stimulating business development within the refugee community but who need additional support and resources. As the committee responsible for helping establish priorities associated with refugees, it seems essential that you begin discussing the possibility of using State money for funding programs that have not been traditionally supported by the federal government. Without making this kind of commitment, the State will ultimately end up spending more over the long run due to the cost of supporting refugees in future years.

I would like to emphasize the fact that it is our belief that refugees are generally highly motivated. It is a fact that there are so many and a fact that they lack the requisite skills and appropriate opportunities that slowly but surely destroys their motivation. We are convinced that with adequate funding refugees will not only become self-sufficient but within a short time become extremely positive and involved members of our economy and society.

However, without adequate resources, this positive potential will be squandered on a human level and prove to be a very costly expense to the society as a whole.

Earlier, I heard Mr. Vice Chairman mention the Lao Community about submitting a proposal if they have any proposal which would help the refugee be self-sufficient. We have one proposal on hand. So, if you want, we can submit you one without the help---still (?) grant from the federal government, but we hope that Mr. Chairman and Mr. Vice Chairman or the committee members will base it on (?) this project and will help the refugee to be self-sufficient as I have heard many times during the testimonies of this morning, self-sufficiency---self-sufficiency is [inaudible].... Now I'm doing that job.

Thank you for your attention.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Mr. Tao, how long have you been here?

MR. LE VAN TAO: Seven years---eight years, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: You're very welcome.

MR. LE VAN TAO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Not many people refer to me as Mr. Vice Chairman, and I'm impressed with that. It wasn't even on my name tag.

MR. LE VAN TAO: Well, before coming here I have to know who would be in committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Uh huh. Have you testified before legislative committees before?

MR. LE VAN TAO: No, sir. This is first time I testify before the committee like this.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: You did your homework very well.

MR. LE VAN TAO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: When I was speaking earlier, what I'm looking for are programs that actually do something rather than teach people, you know, we see so many of these programs that suggest that they're going to prepare people for jobs by teaching them how to write a resume. And I think that we need to get beyond that with the limited funds that we have and then find the refugees that are---or sources that are coming from the federal government. And we have to teach them, as I've been saying to the staff here, how to say (?) kick him in his knuckles so that they can get a job at McDonalds and they [inaudible]....nothings. That's what we ought to be teaching them, rather than how to do a resume or how to do a job interview and all of the other esoteric things that sometimes we spend our resources on and yet there's nothing at the other end of the line.

And, so, I'm impressed with your concrete kind of proposals that teach people how to run a hotel if that's what the need is or is to buy a hotel if that's what the need is or to do farm marketing orders if that's what the need is or any of the other kinds of concrete income-producing jobs producing results that are necessary for people to become self-sufficient and not just they're---not that anyone suggested that today---a job resume or something else.

MR. LE VAN TAO: Mr. Vice Chairman, the reason I mention to you this proposal because my project now helping not only the refugee to get off from welfare but to become employer to help and

perhaps other refugees in that term to become taxpayer, to work, to get off of welfare and to contribute to this society as other, normal members of this society. We don't want to be [inaudible].... We want to contribute to society and become useful.

(
?) ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: You sound like the Republican news man here. (Laughter) Thank you very much.

MR. LE VAN TAO: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Sari Karet, the President of the Cambodian American Foundation? (unidentified speaking of his absence - inaudible) Okay, uhm, [inaudible]....says that Sari Karet can't be notified right now as one person who would come here to speak of the [inaudible]....

(?)
MS. MARR: Good afternoon, my name is Laraunda Marr and I am speaking on behalf of the staff at the English Action Center. I am an ESL teacher employed there. Our Center is a joint project of the Catholic Charities and the International Institute of the East Bay. We are funded through the State of California to provide English language instruction to refugees.

Most of our clients are [inaudible]....Lao and Cambodians from rural areas who have never been in a classroom setting before attending our classes. This group of clients tend to need more support services in order to cope with the complexities of living in our fast-paced, industrial society. This contrasts with the needs of refugees from urban areas who tend to have some education, some basic computational skills and literacy skills and who are often more prepared to enter a language classroom.

The preliterate refugee from a rural area does not have this

exposure and is not familiar with the correlations between sound and symbol which is necessary in the process of becoming literate. Therefore, each skill must be broken down and presented slowly with constant repetition.

We feel that bilingual support is much more effective at the beginning levels, enabling our clients to understand not only language skills but also the cultural setting in which the skills are to be used. English instruction must include some cultural orientations and basic computational skills for this group of clients. It is unrealistic to expect that a preliterate refugee can enter and succeed in the job market after a year of ESL instruction. In our own society, a child is given at least several years of hearing the language, being able to babble it and gradually learning it before he's expected to be literate. We are not equating our refugee clients with a child, but we only wish to point out that the adult refugee must undergo the same process. He must have a lot of time to hear, listen, a chance to babble, a chance to realize that the sounds he made can be symbolized with a letter or with a word, and he needs to learn how to read from left to right---all the basic things that we take for granted.

We would like to present the cases of two of our clients to further illustrate these points. When Student A came to our Center, she could not speak any English nor could she recognize, say or write the alphabet. She couldn't ask or answer the question, "What is your name?" She couldn't even hold a pencil or had no idea of how to use space on the paper, going from left to right or from top to bottom. After six months in our English classroom,

she could communicate with her teacher and classmates in English, giving basic, personal information. After six months, she could copy and spell some words. After one year, she could write notes to the teacher, stating that she had been ill or she had an appointment. After one-and-a-half years, she took the drivers' test and passed. After two years, she got a job in a factory. This is an exceptionally successful case. I think for the most part our clients take much longer at doing this.

(?)

Another example I would like to talk about---most rural people have never used clock-time, they are not familiar with that concept which we take for granted. They tell time by the crowing of the rooster or by the placement of the sun. So, in the process of learning clock-time, we need to present, through a translator, how to use a clock, what the numbers mean, distinguishing between a seven and a two, which is very difficult for them in the very beginning. In one class, a student went from learning numbers, to learning clock faces, to learning to discriminate the function of the clock hands, to counting the minutes and the hour. The student can now tell time, and they understand the concept of telling time, but this whole process took eight months. Of course, other similar conceptual and skill developments are taking place simultaneously.

We constantly hear concern expressed by federal and state governments regarding the welfare dependency rates of refugees. When refugees were taken into this system, many were immediately put on refugee cash assistance or welfare which tends to be a punitive system. We are now faced with tracking and sanctioning

systems which are expensive, ineffective and which take time away from the already very limited resources that we have to provide direct services. These tracking systems are not cost-effective uses of the taxpayers' money. This system has imposed a great deal of guilt and, therefore, even more stress on refugees who are very anxious to work but who are unable to obtain employment. No blame is due to these people, especially in these times of a strained economy when it is difficult even for many Americans to find work.

Thank you very much for your time.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Uhm, I'm curious, you know, I---you heard that---I heard you say that [inaudible]....children take two or three years to listen to the babble, to learn the English and all that and that you're suggesting you take a year to---that the refugee to learn English. Yet, I saw an ad in the paper yesterday that if I go to Berlitz they'll have me speaking Spanish in six weeks.

MS. MARR: Certainly.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: What's the difference?

MS. MARR: Well, the difference is you grow up learning to speak English, you learn to write English, you know your letters---okay, you know grammar. I assume you've been to college? I'm sure you've been to college.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: You'd never know it [inaudible]....

(Laughter)

MS. MARR: Now, an individual from Highland Laos.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Pardon?

MS. MARR: From a tribe in Highland Laos, an individual from that society has never needed to learn how to write. In fact, his language is just spoken.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Berlitz does not teach me how to write, they teach me how to speak it, only. You know, Berlitz, the intensive languages where you go and then you.....

MS. MARR: I know. I understand that. I've learned languages myself, and I know it's faster for someone who has some type of educational background to learn a language.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Yes.

MS. MARR: Okay, now, these people have not.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: [Inaudible]....every refugee is not a Protestant. We know that many of them were civil service.....

MS. MARR: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Many of them were workers of one kind that [inaudible]....literate in their own language, particularly the Vietnamese.

MS. MARR: Right, now.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: [Inaudible].... Why can't.....

MS. MARR: Well, I think it's possible for someone from Vietnam. In the beginning of my talk, I was talking about the differences between refugees from a tribal, preliterate society and one from an urban oriented---who had an urban orientation. I think a Vietnamese who has education and who comes from an urban background can learn to speak English in a year. I think it's possible. I don't think that's an unreasonable expectation. But for someone from a different background, it's much more difficult.

They're learning---they're having difficulty not only with learning but with dealing with this type of society that we live in which is so different.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: I understand what you're saying, and I'm not criticizing you. I'm just using what you said to make a point which I am becoming more and more conscious of in Sacramento and that is we no longer have the luxury to take as much time as we'd like to, to do the things that we want to with the decline of funds from the federal government, with the decline of funds that are available to the State with the crisis that everyone knows about in our state government with---three months ago we were threatening IOUs to pay people with. So that's not going to change suddenly. And, as we know, the refugees are at the bottom of the totem pole. They come after our educational needs for our State and all that. And, what I'm suggesting through you to the audience and everyone within earshot is that we're going to have to as intensively and as quickly and as well as we can and we can't stretch it out for two years, for one year, we're going to have to do it the way Berlitz does it when they want to make money off of me before I go on my [inaudible]....vacation or whatever. And more of the way the United States Army does when they send us to Monterey Language School, and in two months they taught us how to read Japanese or some other foreign language that is not easy for someone with [inaudible]....in which the skills to pick up.

MS. MARR: Mr. Vice Chairman, I invite you to come.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: [Inaudible]....as that other fellow.

MS. MARR: I invite you to come and visit our Center which is

located in Richmond, California. I'd like you to meet some of our clients, get to know them, and watch them learn in a classroom. I think that experience can tell you a lot more than I can here. But, as an educator, I may have a different viewpoint from you. I mean, I understand your concerns.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: I'm just saying that we're running out of time and even more quickly, we're running out of money, and we've got to get it done.

MS. MARR: That's true. But, what is the most effective way of learning? What is an effective English language program? It seems that---is it effective---is it cost effective to have 64 students in a classroom with one teacher teaching? Do they learn well there? Are they going to learn in a year? I don't know the answers to those questions. But.....

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Neither do I. Together we'll figure it out. Thank you very much.

MS. MARR: I would like to invite you to come and visit us. We're located at 2369 Barrett Avenue in Richmond, not very far from the Civic Center.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: In defense of your two-year operation, I suspect that the Berlitz six-weeks course is really very rudimentary. I think that it's kind of "haben sie gut geschlafen?"

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: Certainly.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: And, you know, "Ich bin hunger; Ich hab hunger" rather than really permitting them to have, have a language.

ASSEMBLYMAN AGNOS: [Inaudible]....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: We're both right. (Laughter)

MS. MARR: Wonderful!

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: But, even at Monterey, when they want you to have a very high language skill, that they do take several years. It's a slow process in English. It's a very difficult language. If we were going to design language we wouldn't design English.

MS. MARR: Thank you very much for your time.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Our next speaker is Mr. _____, I'm sorry, Tran Huynh Van Minh, Director of the Indochinese Ecumenical Community Center in Oakland.

MRS. TRAN HUYNH VAN MINH: Good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Good afternoon.

MRS. TRAN HUYNH VAN MINH: Thank you for this opportunity to provide input. I'm a Vietnamese war with the---I came here in 1966 with three young children, not [inaudible]...involuntary immigrant I have to live with---for the future of my children. I'm now the Director of the Indochinese Center funded by Church World Service. I have been in this position for eight years to observe the Indochinese refugee impact in San Francisco and Alameda counties.....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Excuse me, would you mind pulling that microphone just a little closer to yourself? Thank you.

MRS. TRAN HUYNH VAN MINH: And, conversely, I observe the impact of the area of refugees, too.

(?)
I have heard people testify here, but in my viewpoint everyday, I---with [inaudible]...the refugees, I see in many ways you, the

policymaker, have made the refugees so comfortable. That's why they cluster in the Bay Area.

I would like to [inaudible]....a few years ago, you talk
(?) highly about Indochinese refugee. They [inaudible]....the refugee. But, then, year after year, we [inaudible]....and the job
(?) opportunity doesn't seek the refugees in the Bay Area.

I will tell you about ESL---talk about ESL. I was teaching in Monterey, too. I taught Viet GI, the Vietnamese vet. After three months they fluent in Vietnamese. They spoke like me. But, because they study eight hour a day, not two hours like we
(?) do now. And, also, based a lot---those who have the skills, the skills that [inaudible].... But the refugee [inaudible]....of the refugees now. They don't need ESL. They need survival English. I've been learning ESL after 16 years here. I've been learning ESL even though I'm the professional counselor. I have a Master in counseling, but I've been [inaudible]....because my language, even though not perfect, don't prepare me to get the job. To become a professional counselor now, I have to do all kind of interim job in order to climb up. So, I---the clients who come to my Center, I put them on jobs. About hundred people didn't go to ESL at all. But now, they are doing very well. They become supervisors, some of them and---but surely not all can do that.
(?) So for me, the way in order to eat, depression and also [inaudible].... to get the lives to the future of the refugee. Because for me
(?) everyday I was mad. I see they are in darkness. They don't know what their future.

And I would like to give you suggestion in the Bay Area when

you plan for policies for next year, you should include us, people who testify today, people who have experience to resettle them--- they will resettle in this country---who can give you the main factor. I can give you the main factor to survive in this country. Not only me, all my three children are professional now. We came here with emptyhanded. I didn't have any help from [inaudible].... but we work hard, then we---so what the refugee came now that's different because the job is harder to find and all that, but I think that if you would include us in jobs, program of policy planning, I'm sure that the program would cost less and the refugees will resettle faster with the [inaudible].... Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: That's one of the reasons we're having these hearings.

MRS. TRAN HUYNH VAN MINH: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Miss Rona Popal of the Afghan Association for Afghan Refugees in Oakland.

MS. POPAL: Ladies and gentlemen of the committee, my name is Rona Popal. I am from Afghanistan. I'm working as a health aid for the Refugee Health Project.....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: I'm sorry, they can't hear you in back. That's a very insensitive microphone.

MS. POPAL: My name is Rona Popal. I'm from Afghanistan. I work as a health aid for the Refugee Health Project in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. I would like to speak about Afghan refugees.

In the Bay Area, there are more than 3,000 Afghani refugees. Figure cited by the Pakistani government for the mid-1982 were

close to 3 million Afghani refugees; the majority being in provinces that border Afghanistan. This is the largest, single refugee population in the world today.

The refugee in the United States are from the elite of Afghanistan, and they're more sophisticated, more urbanized and better acquainted with the western world than the refugees in Pakistan. Nevertheless, we are likely to experience problem of adjustment in United States.

Our first major difficulty is learning English and a skill will help us secure a job. We need effective ESL classes and job training programs. We have many financial problems. It is difficult to find a low income housing, and the welfare payments are not adequate to pay for the rent, in absence of low income housing, utilities, food and transportation. Many of Afghan refugees are young people who are trying to attend college on a full-time basis, but their welfare benefits will be cut and they're unable to find a job without the skill and English. We do not want to be on welfare. We are very independent people. However, by lacking English and a skill, we have no choice but to accept living this way in this new home.

We cannot forget the mental health problems of our people. Many of us feel lonely, isolated, depressed. We have left our families and often feel as though we have lost our identity. We have six suicide attempts by the Afghan woman, and to my knowledge, there are no mental health services for Afghan refugees in the Bay Area.

Many of us are concerned about the political situation in

Afghanistan. We feel displaced and unsure of possibility returning back to Afghanistan. We know we must make a new life here and many things are so different. For instance, in our culture, there are no such a thing as dating between girl and boy like the western style. Marriage are usually arranged by the parent. Children have to listen to parent and respect their older people. These cultural differences will cause tension between parent and their children as younger generation grow up in United States.

In the end, I'd like to thank for the support that you American people given us.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: If your people back home continue fighting so effectively, you may create 200 million Russian refugees. Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Colston Westbrook? [Inaudible]....Sari Karet if he's here.

MR. KARET: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman.....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Good afternoon.

MR. KARET:Mr. Vice Chairman.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Come get his microphone, please.

MR. KARET: I'm sorry I'm late. I kind of rush back in. The point that I would like to make is to have the self-help group that exists, the emerging group in the community to be participants in the process of the---making recommendations and funding. Also, the committee should take note that there's a lot of individual in the refugee community that give much of their time on a volunteer basis to help, and what they need is mostly

[inaudible]....assistance or certain ways to help them give a better service to their community.

And, also, the important point to stress is also the cultural side of the refugee. To ask refugee to go through the mainstream (?) or make him mainstream right away is very difficult. A refugee cannot go to a [inaudible]....or go to an environment that he's not used to. So the cultural point is very important. In the community there's a---there are large groups that emerge as far as dance groups, performing art group that does a lot for their own community when they have cultural events, and there are people laughing, and that creates a sense of unity and dignity for the Cambodian community, and this is important. So far that cultural has been down the ladder as far as funding.

I think, also, we should try to find a way to link those volunteers with other service provider and on a federal and state level as well. Try to get the refugee referred to those group in order to have some kind of network. I think those are point important.

I'd like to ask the committee if I could send it on a later date my comments.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Please do.

MR. KARET: Thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Pham Duc Vu, the Indochinese Health Project in Alameda?

MR. PHAM DUC VU: Good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Good afternoon.

MR. PHAM DUC VU: Dear ladies and gentlemen, my name is Vu Pham. I have been in the United States for five years. At present, I am employed by the Refugee Health Project in Alameda County as a Health Service Aid. In this work, I translate and advise doctor and nurse about the different treatment for Asian refugees whose culture is different from American. (Pause - microphone adjusting?) In this work, I translate and advise doctor and nurse about the different treatment for Asian refugee whose culture is different from American. Another part of my responsibility is to help the Vietnamese refugee learn about the American way of life, because this is very different than their way of life in Vietnam.

When I lived in Vietnam, I was a high school teacher and then an Administrative Deputy of the Cadre Training Center. I was not happy with the way the Communists were running our country. I decided to escape. My family and I left Vietnam by a small boat in 1977 and arrived in Malaysia three days later. One day after we arrived in Malaysia aboard the Roland ship, which was a Panamanian ship, we were held on the Roland ship while it went around Malaysia, Indonesia for 100 days. During this time, our son was born. Then the Roland ship returned to the Trengganu District which is in North Malaysia. With the help of the United Nations International Force and Red Cross, we were able to go to the refugee camp in Pulau Besa which is a small island of the Trengganu District of Malaysia. We stayed in the camp for almost eight months, and then we were approved to come to United States.

When my family and I arrived, we were fortunate to be sponsored by the Lutheran Immigration Services who provided us with a

place to live, food, clothing, health care and help us learn English. After our arrival, I was fortunate to find work in a machine shop in 1978, then as a custodian with the Hayward School Department and with the Alameda County Health Care Service Agency, and now I am employed by the Refugee Health Project.

Because of my work with the Health Care Agency, I have been very concerned about the refugee health problem. Two of the biggest problem for the refugee in my area, 1) is translation and 2) is transportation. At this present time, the Vietnamese refugee in South Alameda County are trying to organize a volunteer group to help with these two problems. When a Vietnamese refugee need a ride to a health care facility, he or she call me. I have a list of other refugees who are willing to drive. I call one of them and arrange a ride.

There is one Vietnamese doctor in Oakland, Dr. Phan Kim Nguyen, who sees newly arrived refugees who come via O.D.P. program and are not eligible for Medi-Cal or cash assistance. Dr. Phan sees them free of charge. And there is still much work to be done.

Because refugees have a poor nutrition and lack of knowledge of prenatal care, they need health education in these areas. Dr. Phan and I are planning to organize the health education classes for Vietnamese refugee on weekend. However, we need equipment such as visual aids, a movie project, etc. We would like to work with the health agencies in Alameda County to set up these classes.

In addition, many refugees come needing health care for T.B., parasites, dental care and many other health problems.

Beside the health care problem of the the refugees, I would

like to speak something more about their social problems. The refugees were even trying to learn and work hard but still had made some mistake by lack of knowledge of the Western way and have not enough English or none English. These problems are concerning and affecting to another problem such as education, skill training, housing and mental problem and exactly in this really hard time.

The refugee are trying to help together on these problems beside the helping of the government and American volunteer groups, but there is still much work to be done to help the refugee to move on their new life in the United States.

In conclusion, the refugees have struggled for survival, peace and freedom for a better life in their new country. We ask you, the American people, to support us during this difficult time of resettlement. We all want to thank American people for accepting us, and we promise to bring all of the riches of our culture to our new home. We also promise to work hard and to help others so that we may all live happily in our new land and also to help our new country.

Finally, we wish to become a part of our new country and be accepted as each and everyone of you are.

Thank you for your time, attention and concern.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you for your good thoughts. Your objectives are very constructive.

MR. PHAM DUC VU: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: I think one of the things we've heard today is that the refugees in this country certainly are not just from Southeast Asia.

MR. PHAM DUC VU: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: They're from Africa and Afghanistan and also from Poland and Czechoslovakia and all over the world, and the problems are very similar, and we welcome you all to what's a very---has been a very serious disruption in your lives.

MR. PHAM DUC VU: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: We're confident you're going to be very good citizens. And that's why we're here to welcome you and to hope that we can ease that transition.

MR. PHAM DUC VU: We try to stick up something---we were
(?)
helping it from one or two and we try to stick up something, some-
(?)
what we need, how we need and as you can helping us. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Good. The committee has some serious time problems. Several of us have airplanes that we probably need to leave about 3:15, so perhaps the remaining speakers to the best of their ability, particularly if they also have written statements, would---might be willing to condense their verbal statements as far as possible. The staff will remain, so if you don't have time to testify before 3:15, don't worry, we will be here to receive your message.

MR. VUONG: Miss Kenlynn Schroeder? Western Region Representative, Church World Services.

MS. SCHROEDER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the Joint Committee. I am Kenlynn Schroeder, Western Region Representative of the Immigration and Refugee Program of Church World Service, and I'm here today to address issues of concern to our agency and welcome this opportunity to provide information. Church

World Service has resettled 26 different nationalities of refugees since 1946, and I welcome this opportunity to be here today.

I'd like to touch briefly on five topics of concern. Number one is targeted assistance. I feel that for the county boards of supervisors to designate the respective county welfare departments to develop the county plans without ORS authority to ensure adequate consultation and planning seems to leave the chances for abuse fairly high. I would like to suggest that ORS be given authority to give the counties the guidelines for planning as well as participation in the evaluation before the acceptance of targeted assistance monies.

Number two, Medi-Cal separation from cash assistance. There is a misconception that cash assistance and Medi-Cal are one package, and this has prevented refugees' self-sufficiency in many cases. We know that in many cases Medi-Cal is an interim assistance for a refugee who's employed with a family just until he or she has a job which supplies health coverage. And refugees, in many cases, have applied for welfare only and left the office also with cash assistance which has negated the sponsor assistance even when the sponsor was still willing to provide for that family. So, we would suggest that the process of applying for Medi-Cal be separated out and also that the numbers of refugees on Medi-Cal, only, not be included in the total statistics when reporting on refugees on welfare, because to have them lumped together presents a distorted view of resettlement.

Number three, the advisory committee to the Joint Legislative Committee. I would like to commend the State of California for

instituting the Joint Legislative Committee of Refugee Resettlement and Immigration. And I understand there is to be an advisory committee, and its selection is a crucial part of the effectiveness of this effort, and I'm concerned that the selection criteria and time line for the selection of the committee be made public knowledge. I suggest that the members be selected from two well-established refugee organizations in the State of California and that the State Refugee Forum Committee and the California Joint Voluntary Agency Committee. And, further, that one-half of the members of the advisory committee be representatives of the refugee community.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Since we only have eight slots there, we're quite confident that in our ultimate selection we will be able to attend everybody.
(?)

MS. SCHROEDER: Number four, the quarterly consultations. According to the Refugee Act, the ORR Draft Action Transmittal requests that the states hold quarterly consultations and report to ORR on resettlement in the state. I would suggest that these consultations be best accomplished not by setting up additional meetings but by using the established consultation mechanisms already in place which meet monthly; namely, again, the local and state forums and the local and state joint voluntary agency committees. The collective expertise and experience of the members of these organizations, which are representative of all involved in the resettlement process in the State of California, would enable the proper data and recommendations to be given for effective consultations, and it would be much more cost effective to have the agenda of the consultation be superimposed on one of their

regular meetings.

And, finally, number five, I would like to hold up recognition of private sector resources. Church World Service through its member denominations, provides sponsors, which generate from the churches and the rest of the private sector in their community, many resources to respond to the needs of refugees and their families, and many of this is done by volunteers. So, rather than be ignored by the county welfare departments, these private sector resources need to be recognized and counted as valuable and valid services in the refugee resettlement plan. Complete information exchange is essential between the county welfare departments and the voluntary agency to prevent duplication of services and also abuse of welfare services.

And, finally, that is the example I want to hold up before you: the public and the private sector, working in partnership to enable responsible refugee resettlement far into the future. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Is Mr. Nguyen Dinh Sach and Mr. Hang Phong Cao here? No. We'll proceed to the next one. Miss Lesley Sachs, please.

MS. SACHS: Good afternoon. My name is Lesley Sachs, and I am a registered nurse and currently the Refugee Health Services Coordinator for Alameda County Health Care Services Agency. I'm here today because I am extremely concerned about the anticipated cuts in funding for the various aspects of refugee resettlement; in particular, the provision of health care.

As a provider and manager in public health, I am acutely aware of the negative repercussions of a health system that emphasizes emergency and acute care rather than preventive care. I am dismayed at the possibility of exacerbation of preventable and curable conditions among the refugees, and I see this as a direct result of projected budget cuts.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: As a health professional, do you think those kinds of changes could in any possible way be cost effective?

MS. SACHS: Absolutely. I think you knew the answer before you asked. If we take care of people, all people, in a preventive mode, this is much less expensive than waiting until they're very sick down the line, putting people in hospitals, because long-term care is considerably more expensive than preventive care.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: So, making these kinds of financial cuts is, in the long run, much more expensive.

MS. SACHS: Much more expensive. Absolutely, and thank you for underlining my point.

Furthermore, I am profoundly aware of the fact that health care is a fundamental component of the resettlement process. An unhealthy individual is not an employable individual.

To explain this more fully, I'm going to describe Alameda County's health care screening process. All the refugees, when they come to our attention or the County's attention, receives a letter in their language inviting them to come in for health screening. The term "health assessment" or "health screening" refers only to the initial health history, physical exam and the lab work performed. After this exam, all patients must be seen

for follow-up which refers to the treatment of an education about conditions discovered during the first visit. Without follow-up, the health screening it totally useless.

Following the first exam, a patient is seen for many follow-up visits. The conditions found in high numbers in the refugee population, which my colleagues have mentioned, frequently require months and/or years of follow-up.

Concurrent with follow-up, a referral may be made to public health nursing where the refugee is visited in his or her home for the purpose of education, ensuring compliance with medical routines or where in the scope that the person will need extensive follow-up for their condition.
(?)

Access to this entire long-range and complicated system of health care is close to, if not totally, impossible without interpreter services available. One of the legislators who left earlier mentioned something about a system of voluntary interpreters or a traineeship where interpreters would be available. This is really not the answer because for consistency of health care, the medical interpreter needs to be a part of the ongoing medical team of care.

Now, for the sake of saving time, I am going to skip a couple of pages where I've elaborated on some of these problems. I will be submitting testimony in writing. However, I do want to mention one thing and then specific recommendations. A recent survey conducted in Alameda County, through the Health Care Services Agency, demonstrated that 35% of the refugees surveyed---this is Southeast Asian refugees---had been unable to work for an

extended period of time due to personal illness or illness in the family. I think this is the only survey of its kind that's been done that I'm aware of up to this point.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Do you have a copy of that that you could also submit to the committee?

MS. SACHS: I certainly can. I will mail that in to you.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: We would appreciate having a copy.

MS. SACHS: I urge this committee to consider the following recommendations:

- 1.) That there be a commitment on the part of the federal government to fund a permanent subsidy to provide for health access for refugees until such time as they are fluent in English.
- 2.) A set-aside of health dollars so that health care does not have to compete with other very necessary resettlement services such as employment, English Second Language, mental health, social adjustment, etc.
- 3.) A process be established to coordinate between the two funding sources that fund health access. These are the federal dollars that come to us, I think, as ORS and the Center for Disease Control dollars that fund the preventive or as is known as the health screening component. These two funding sources need to coordinate so that there's not both duplication of services and underutilization of services and many refugees slipping between the cracks.
- 4.) A standardized protocol for health screening and follow-up must be established nationwide.

- 5.) Targeted assistance programs be developed to train health professionals and staff, involving linkages with the medical sector to assure future job market. Targeted assistance programs also should build in a component for a comprehensive pre-employment physical examination and follow-up so that people that are trained and employed can continue to maintain employment.
- 6.) And I believe this has been recommended earlier, that presumptive eligibility for Medi-Cal become policy so that refugees can receive health screening and follow-up in a timely manner.
- 7.) And, finally, that mental health and social adjustment services be prioritized for funding but not be dependent on the defunding of health services for their funding.

The last point I'd like to make which is very timely is that I urge this committee, given the positions that you're all in, to support the Chacon bill, AB 885, which calls for 24-hour---that 24-hour facilities provide interpreter services and signing as is necessary.

Thank you very much for your time and your efforts. Questions?

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you. We'll look forward to receiving those data from you.

MS. SACHS: Okay, I will send them to you.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Dean Leng, Khmer Samaky Association, San Francisco.

MR. LENG: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and all committee members. This is my first time to testify, and it's been so

interesting, I decided to skip lunch.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: We, too.

MR. LENG: I would like to take this opportunity for me to speak out of an untold even not overlooked story of the [inaudible]... of the Cambodian refugees, sometimes we call "Khmer." Khmer-Cambodian means the same thing. It's a [inaudible]...that people [inaudible]...language Cambodian and just like given, Western given word for---to mean Khmer.

More specifically speaking, I would like to address the importance of the MAA---that's Mutual Assistance Association---particularly our Association, Khmer Samaky of America based in San Francisco.

Indochinese refugees have gone through many, most painful experiences as they traveled by boat or by foot through the jungle, filled with mines, bandits, starvation, lack of medicine, plus the [inaudible]....situation caused by war and the continual fighting between many factions, including their aggressors and their aggressees.

For those Cambodians who are lucky enough to be admitted to the United States, many insurmountable problems block and erode that efforts and moderation in trying to achieve the self-sufficiency, which is our highest goal in the refugee resettlement program. Let me illustrate this issue to the reutilization of scenario. I've lived in the United States for more than 10 years and have been totally involved with Cambodian refugees in the Cambodian community for more than eight years. My eyes open a small [inaudible]....I started my first job in the United States as an

assistance to a dishwasher, and now I'm a social worker.

I've seen what---I been more actively involved since 1979 [inaudible]....to work more closely in the community in the San Francisco Bay Area. I have seen Cambodian refugees literally dumped in a big ocean of problems in the United States. How could they arrive at that distance and almost unreachable shore of self-sufficiency? Let's not forget that in the ocean of the problem, there'll only be boats---some are big, some are small, some get [inaudible]....or simply shipmate wrecked. These boats are trying to help refugees to get to the shore---mostly, of course, with the money from the government. Well, how many refugees have reached that distant shore? The plain fact of the welfare dependency right now speaks for itself. There are so many Cambodian refugees drowning despite the great performances of the current service delivery system. After Cambodian refugees resettle in United States, there will be virtually no ongoing orientations. They are assisted by many agencies, some of which do not have the expertise, leadership and unique cultural background for refugees to identify with. Cambodian refugees, some are treated a lot of times with just, I will term it, one-side [inaudible]....of programs.

The [inaudible]....Cambodian refugees are quite alarming. They keep going to school for English as a second language, yet they do not receive a need outside help to [inaudible]....the rest of the class who have better background as Cambodian refugees are the survivors from the Communist regime and they are mostly rural. So graphically, most Cambodian students fall behind in class to a point where some think they have very bad brains. Why?

Because they can only blame themselves and not the service delivery system. The failure to learn English because of the lack of additional and more suitable programs domestically leads to many of the problems including mental health, alcoholism, violence in family, etc. The bottomline is that that self-confidence for self-sufficiency is greatly eroded and in some cases destroyed.

Allow me to emphasize the important of the Mutual Assistance Association, so call, in short, MAA. MAA has expertise [inaudible].... and surpassable understanding of our unique ethnic cultural background for our people to identify with as well as leadership to bring about their moderation and to bring back that self-confidence necessary for them, again, to become wholly ready to achieve self-sufficiency. Incidentally, we all know that the cause of refugee resettlement going skyward, and many studies by the government, (?) and there will always be studies conducted by the government, is a useless cause.

Now, we'd like to address the very crucial function of the MAAs. MAA is a self-help group with immeasurable moderation [inaudible]....whether or not. There is [inaudible]...fund. Yet, an injection of even a little bit amount of money in these MAAs could produce many wonders and even solve many problems of many agencies whose services could enlist [inaudible]....bit money. Of course, I am sure that---I assume that previous [inaudible].... assistance could be provided to the MAA to become a full-fledged service provider.

It is my [inaudible]....of commitment that your committee could serve as a voice in that [inaudible]....to ensure a control

language so that the MAA, the unsinkable raft I call, could become a treatable boat to [inaudible]....to assist refugees so that that noble and distant shore, the self-sufficiency, could be achieved. And [inaudible]....the refugee will even open bridge of commitment to avail ourselves, and specifically Cambodians, to you, to your committee and to other important personalities in making possible for a refugee resettlement program [inaudible].... efficient based on numbers on of the paper, alone, but also effectiveness in reality so that that chance for self-sufficiency are at optimal levels. As an MAA, I believe there are many MAAs [inaudible]...., including ours, who couldn't even crawl but now we can walk. With your assistance through your committee, I believe that one day we will be able to walk and to run competitively.

If you have any questions, I will like to answer as briefly as possible. I know you are running out of time, and I speak today not to do any damage to any others from the agency that's been helping the Cambodians, and I would like to take full responsibility for whatever I say, and I wish to answer any questions after [inaudible]....testimony.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: You're walking very well. We're looking forward to seeing you run.

MR. LENG: Thank you very much.

MR. VUONG: Dr. Steven Jung and Dr. Linda Phillips-Jones of American Institute for Research.

DR. JUNG: Good day.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Good day.

DR. JUNG: We shall be very brief. The American Institutes

for Research is a non-profit corporation located in Palo Alto. We have been asked to come today to outline to you a refugee employability test that we have developed under a grant from the California Office of Refugee Services. Just point out that Dr. Phillips-Jones is a teacher of English as a second language. I'm a psychometrician, and together we worked on the test.

The purpose of the test is three-fold. First, it's to screen the employability of new refugees to try to place them into the most appropriate training or employment assistance options that are available at the time. The intent of this process is to try to conserve scarce resources when only a certain number can be served. The intent is to serve those who can most---who are most likely to benefit from the services. The test is currently available in five different languages. The material that I have to pass out to you provides more technical detail about the development of the test, the procedures for using it. We have recently submitted to ORS a proposal to disseminate the test throughout the State so that it can be used in all refugee screening centers, and we're hopeful that that process will soon take place.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: What are the five languages that your test is in?

DR. JUNG: It's in English of course, Lao, Khmer, Vietnamese and Chinese. So, it's heavily oriented towards Southeast Asian refugees. We have tried it with non-Southeast Asian refugees. We believe that with some translation service, it can be appropriate for other ethnic groups as well.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: What kind of validity criteria have you used to.....

DR. JUNG: We have been limited validation in terms of actual success on the job. The main validation that we were able to do as part of the development process of the test was work with a wide number of experts in refugee placement around the State and get their opinions as to what the crucial elements are for success on the job and success in training. We tried to divide the categories---the test deals three categories. One is probably "immediately employable;" the second is "employable with supportive services of such-and-such a type," and a third is "employability is a long-range prospect."

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: That sounds very interesting, and you have.....

DR. JUNG: I have materials that discuss the more technical characteristics of the test and what it's intended to do.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Excellent! I'll look forward to reviewing them.

MR. VUONG: I think one of the.....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Do you want to speak?

?? DR. PHILLIPS-JONES: No.

MR. VUONG: No.

?? DR. JUNG: Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Uhm, I think we had one speaker earlier who would be coming to speak for the Somalian and Haitians for refugees, and I think [inaudible].... Mr. Colston Westbrook for Minority Consultants?

MR. WESTBROOK: Mr. Chairman, other committee members, ladies

and gentlemen, I appreciate this opportunity to appear before this Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement and Immigration of the California State Legislature. My purpose in appearing before you today is to speak about the influx of refugees to the State of California, especially those refugees of African descent that have immigrated from the Republic of Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Somalia.

Firstly, let me provide you with some information regarding my relations with refugees. Commencing in 1975 with the fall of Saigon, I started to work with Indochinese refugees. Thanks to that initial step, I became involved with the teaching of English to Indochinese refugees and then served on the Board of Directors for the Indochinese Ecumenical Community Center in nearby Oakland. After a tenure of three years, I resigned my membership in order to become the Coordinator/Instructor of the Center's Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) Program. I was pleased to be involved in the Center's VESL Program because I learned a lot about the assistance that was being given to refugees other than those from Indochina. In fact, I commend Mrs. Tran Huynh Van Minh, the Executive Director of the Indochinese Ecumenical Community Center for her personal and untiring efforts to help all refugees irrespective of national origin.

Working at that Indochinese Center helped me to understand the plight of other refugees, especially those of African descent that hail from the Republic of Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Somalia. At this juncture, then, permit me to focus your attention on the Haitian situation.

In the Greater San Francisco Bay Area, there are approximately 40 Haitian entrants. They, in fact, do not yet have refugee status and most are involved in litigation with respect to asylum. The Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Oakland has sponsored five of the Haitians; most of the others have been sponsored by the Catholic Migration and Resettlement offices in San Francisco and San Jose; and the Good Samaritan Episcopal Church of San Francisco is housing the Haitian Cultural Refugee Center.

The work of those church organizations to help the Haitians has been commendable, but they cannot sustain their work due to financial constraints. Please keep in mind that no Haitian entrant is on welfare and that eligibility for the latter is somewhat unclear due to the pending litigation. Nevertheless, efforts are being made by the Board of Directors of the Haitian Cultural Refugee Center, of which I am a member, to mainstream the Haitians as rapidly as possible. But, many of them still have English language difficulties and urgently need job training.

In October of 1982, Minority Consultants, in conjunction with the Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Oakland, submitted a very comprehensive proposal to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in Washington, D.C. Our proposal emphasized job training and was tied to a very intensive Vocational English as a Second Language Program via an arrangement with the East Bay Skill Center, also located in Oakland. Unfortunately, the proposal was disapproved, and although various reasons were given, we later learned from Washington, D.C. ORR that the State of California ORR simply did not want any more Haitians to come to California.

The Haitian situation in the Bay Area has now become critical. As I previously stated, the Catholics, the Lutherans, the Episcopalians, have done commendable work, but they cannot sustain the financial burden indefinitely. It is obvious that non-sectarian funds must be sought and effectively utilized.

Aside from VESL and job training, the Haitians need urgent health care assistance. For, one Haitian recently died in San Francisco, and the cause of death is rather nebulous. The doctors who were initially treating the Haitian who died encountered extreme difficulties in trying to treat the patient because he spoke very little English. Thanks to a Haitian-Creole speaking volunteer, now an American resident, treatment could be made. That was only one health care situation. There are others.

Now permit me to turn your attention to the Somali situation. There are approximately 100 to 200 Somalis in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area. Most of these Somalis have immigrated to the United States for permanent residence purposes. Some, however, have come to the United States via Saudi Arabia where they went following their escape from the "Ogaden Region" of Ethiopia. Although they were able to find work, menial as it was, in Saudi Arabia, many encountered racial discrimination, and the only other alternative for many of these individuals was to find some way of immigrating to the United States which was, in many cases, as a student; hence, they categorized themselves as "student refugees." For, they cannot return to the Ogaden Region because it is now under Ethiopian rule; they cannot go to Somalia---even though they are Somali---because the Somali government looks upon them as

Ethiopians; and the Saudi's don't want them.

Most of the Somali's who are not students receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) which is appreciated but barely enables them to survive. The Somali refugees now--know that there is an 18-month limit on RCA; hence, they are exerting every possible effort to secure work that will enable them to survive. Unfortunately, many of them have English language and job training problems similar to those of the Haitians. In addition, there seems to be a general lack of organization within the Somali refugee community in that the Somali's do not have a cultural or refugee center that would facilitate social intercourse with Americans other than refugees. This speaker has been providing limited assistance, and it is hoped that in the not too distant future that a Somali-American friendship association will be realized.

Mr. Chairman, other committee members, I could go on and on about the situations that I've brought before you, but obviously, the time constraint does not permit me to do so. Therefore, in my final comments, I would like to provide you with these recommendations:

- 1.) That federal, state and local funds be available to provide better assistance to the Haitian and Somali refugees. Such funds should be used to provide immediate and intensive VESL and job training, preferably at the East Bay Skill Center, a training institution that has had an excellent job placement record.
- 2.) That immediate health screening be provided free of charge. It would behoove the City of San Francisco, for

example, to act promptly considering the alleged connection between Haitians and AIDS.

- 3.) That this Joint Committee consider sponsoring a refugee conference that would entail a "call for papers" and individual presentations of selected information. This speaker has considerable experience in conference preparation and paper-presentation.
- 4.) As a former member of the Ad Hoc Committee for the implementation of AB 3154 and [AB] 3461, I suggest that this Joint Committee's consideration of a proposal to establish an employer's training academy that would have a trainee disequilibrium in favor of American citizens but would have some sort of triggering mechanism, perhaps a 70:30 ratio percentage one that would accomodate refugee trainees.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: The Somalians are clearly political refugees.

MR. WESTBROOK: I beg your pardon?

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: The Somalians are clearly political refugees.

MR. WESTBROOK: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: The Haitian issue I think is hardly economic or political.

MR. WESTBROOK: Well, that's a problem. Of course, where the Somalis, the situation is very critical because of the political situation. The Haitian refugees, too. They should be looked upon somewhat in that vein. Unfortunately, the United States Government

has---we have diplomatic relations with Haiti. Therefore, those people coming from Haiti evidentially are always categorized as economic refugees.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Does the Simpson-Mazzoli bill address the Haitian refugee situation at all?

MR. WESTBROOK: Well, I don't know to the whole extent of it, but there's some relation to it.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: But it doesn't solve it?

MR. WESTBROOK: I don't know.

UNIDENTIFIED: [Inaudible]....

MR. WESTBROOK: It's the date, that's right.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: The date's the critical issue?

UNIDENTIFIED: [Inaudible]....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: That date's not in law yet, though, is it?

MR. WESTBROOK: I'd like to note, Mr. Chairman, that just recently 17 Haitians arrived in the United States on Friday and we're [inaudible]....it on a Monday. It's a clear violation of the United Nations Charter for the first country of asylum.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: There has been clear-cut discrimination.

MR. WESTBROOK: Beg your pardon?

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: There has been clear-cut discrimination in the way the federal government has acted with respect to the Haitian refugees.

MR. WESTBROOK: Very. Very much. Clear questionable. Told me very frankly, very point blank over the telephone with respect to it, I do not definitely---first of all, the State here does

not want any Haitians anymore.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: You incurred that about California?

MR. WESTBROOK: Yes!

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Could you give us a reference to that?

MR. WESTBROOK: Yes!

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Would you?

MR. WESTBROOK: Yes!

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you.

MR. WESTBROOK: You're welcome.

MR. VUONG: Mr. Kiet Lam from the Refugee Health Agency^(?)

MR. KIET LAM: Good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Good afternoon.

MR. KIET LAM: My name is Kiet Lam, and I work with the Refugees Project which is a joint project of Catholic Charities of---in Oakland and International Institute of East Bay. I'm a Health Services Coordinator. We serve all refugees in both Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

I grew up in Saigon, Vietnam. I escaped by boat to Taiwan on 1975. I was on the boat for 9 days. We were very lucky because we didn't have any problems with food and water. Others wasn't so lucky as we were. I arrived in the United States in 1976 with no English background. I learned hard, work hard, and it wasn't easy.

Since I work with the Health Agency, I'm concerned about the refugees and their health problems. I would like to share with you with some of the problems our clients encounter with health care in the United States.

In the refugee population, we find that mental and physical health problems are closely related. A mental health problem often has physical relates, and it is important for the medical practitioner to be sensitive to this. Also, many refugees are model patients in the health care setting and, therefore, do not receive appropriate treatment. The case of one of my clients illustrates this point. She's 33 years old, she escaped Vietnam with her parents in 1980 by boat, they did not receive enough food and water, her parents became very ill. By the time they made it to the camp her parents died of hunger, she became depressed. In the last two years in the United States, she has tried to commit suicide three times---one, overdose of the T.B. medication because she has a positive skin test. She was admitted to the County Hospital; however, she didn't manifest any strange behavior and was released four days later. Two weeks later she jumped into the rush hour traffic on a busy street, but she didn't die. The third time, she took overdose of sleeping pills. She was admitted to J ward, which is a mental ward, of the County Hospital for mental illness. We worked with the staff there because there was some communication problem. Finally, she got referred to Asian Community Mental Health in Oakland. They were able to help her with the bilingual staff.

Without the help of the Refugees Health Project, Asian Community Mental Health and other professional staff at the hospital, this woman would be dead by now or would be permanently confined to a mental hospital. Now she's back to school to learn English and later she will be able to find work and move on to her new

life in this country.

Our agency also has done a lot of work with pregnant women, and these are some of the problems which concern us:

- 1.) Poor nutrition and lack of knowledge of prenatal care.
- 2.) Because of the poor nutrition and lack of prenatal care, there are complicated births, premature births and sometimes birth defects.
- 3.) The cultural differences complicate perinatal care, for example:
 - a) There's carbon monoxide poisoning;
 - b) The families are unwilling to leave high risk babies in hospital because of their distrust with the American professional;
 - c) And the third is discomfort with the routine prenatal exam.
- 4.) Language barriers create confusion.

We refugees have struggled for survival, for freedom, for peace and for a better life in the next generation. We ask you, the American people, to support us during this difficult time of our resettlement. In return, we promise to bring all the riches of our culture and work hard to help others and to help our new country.

Thank you very much for your time and attention.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: That sounds like a very good bargain for both of us. Thank you.

MR. VUONG: Our next speaker is someone who's very gracious to [inaudible]....stay as late as possible. Cathleen Gretenhardt,

Director of the Catholic Migration and Resettlement Office in San Francisco. Thank you, Cathleen.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Have we left the best for last?

MS. GRETENHART: Pardon me?

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Have we left the best for last?

MS. GRETENHART: Mostly disjointed, but quick. I have a number of thoughts I'm going to try not to duplicate that anyone else has said except to tell you that I'm very much in support of AB 885---it's essential. There's also a grave need for con-
(?)
tinuation of the pantheon of services which have been offered to refugees when they're dealing with people from 12 countries, speaking 18 to 20 languages and dialects. We have brought people here. We have to respond to those needs until they are ready to become self-sufficient, and I think we can help them to become self-sufficient.

The issue of separation of Medi-Cal and cash assistance has already been addressed, and I will address it further in written remarks to the committee.

Just some information which I don't know that it has been brought up today. There was a study done in 1978 on 130,000 refugees who had arrived since 1975, and it covered federal fiscal years---the three previous federal fiscal years, and it documented how much refugees had paid in taxes. It's based on 130,000 refugees over a period of three years, and it is estimated that only 40% of those were adults who were working, and during that period of time, they paid \$30-40 million in federal taxes alone. It's just a matter of information.

Final issue is that the federal and state government have to be very serious about supporting the community efforts of refugees. They are the people who will be here and will be in their communities long after the other programs are gone. They're the people who will have and who are developing the appropriate mechanisms for responding to their communities' needs.

The large agencies, we have a very specific mission, and that mission is not to be there forever. The refugee ethnic self-help groups can help their own communities in a way that no one else can in the years to come. And the federal government and the state government must take their efforts very seriously and offer the support that's needed, and that support may be in the form of technical assistance, to begin with, but to put real money behind the proposals and projects that they develop and that means not \$50,000 which buys, you know, two-and-a-half staff positions, but it means real money, for real development over the coming years. Does not preclude any other programs. It means helping each of those communities to develop their own base and to support their own leadership. There are probably 12 to 14 different communities, and they're going to be here, and we have to support that development and that face. That's it.

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: Thank you. And we have one unscheduled witness in the back?

MR. VUONG: Mr. Le Ngoc Linh of the Vietnamese Friendship and Mutual Assistance Association.

MR. TRAN VAN SANG: Mr. Le Ngoc Linh, the Chairman of the Vietnamese Association of Mutual Assistance in San Francisco Bay

Area left. I am his assistant---Vice Chairman of the Association.

MR. VUONG: Could I ask your name, please?

MR. TRAN VAN SANG: It's with your---my name is Sang Van Tran, Vice Chairman of the Vietnamese Association. With your permission, I would like to express in condensed term of what we wrote in the written testimony I submitted to you already.

First I would like to thank you for letting us having this opportunity to express our feeling that could be helpful for you and for us to get out as quickly as possible [inaudible]...the Vietnamese refugee out of public assistance and to become self-sufficient and to become a taxpayer, a [inaudible]...of the burden of the taxpayer.

First I would like to say thank you. I appreciate so much of the help of every agency who welcome us, the [inaudible]...of the Vietnamese refugee in this area [inaudible].... But I think there is time that we devise this policy and let the people to help themselves. Help them to help themselves. This formula we adopted our country to help our villages, to help themselves in [inaudible]...in self-development in many projects in democratic way and this is so simple.

(?)

[Inaudible]....you are very pride---very proud to help hard working to earn our living, and we are not proud to go begging for the [inaudible].... But the system in this country, however, sometime hurt our project because when you are talking about [inaudible]...., when talking about the public assistance, we are talking about Medi-Cal, we are talking about help from the---older people, but we're talking that way, we're talking [inaudible]....

aspects of the refugee program. There are many, many of the Vietnamese refugee who never get any kind of assistance from the government or any agency. Then we are proud of it, we are so---
(?)
many thousands of Vietnamese [inaudible]....do they advocate
(?)
social etiquette, we pay tax, we [inaudible]....in every kind of field---in college, in the electronics field, in business, in any kind of field, and we do [inaudible].... American social etiquette.

(?)
So, what I would like to [inaudible]....is not a precise or negative aspect of Vietnamese refugee but to develop the positive English, let them be proud of themselves, help them to help themselves. Because no other people can understand ourselves. Let's say a [inaudible]...., the people who deal with the refugee, most of them in the [inaudible]....refugee existence on the same level, but there are how many refugees who hide their money and get
(?)
public assistance? Because there are people who deal with these refugees do not know who they are. If these people who have the authority know who they are would not let them have this money. So we are not proud to [inaudible]....from, of you but this is a fact of life, so what I would like to [inaudible]....is to let our people to help our people by---give assistance to the MAA to build up their own community and to build up their family to [inaudible]....who very comfortable for them. It's fact of [inaudible]....Vietnamese structure family so they can go on welfare, [inaudible]....time to get public assistance.

So thank you so much for letting me speak to you and one more time I would like to answer any questions if you.....

CHAIRMAN CARPENTER: You're quite welcome. Thank you for

coming and sharing your thoughts with us. And with that, we
stand in adjournment.

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